

SUPPLEMENTS TO
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE



Augustine's Confessions

Ten Studies



JOHANNES VAN OORT

BRILL

Augustine's Confessions

Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae

TEXTS AND STUDIES OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND LANGUAGE

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By

Johannes van Oort



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To my grandchildren

*Lucas Johannes
Sophie Ines Elisabeth
Feline Amadée*



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Introduction

The ten chapters of this book reflect my study of Augustine's *Confessions* during the past fifteen years. Once I started with his great work *On the City of God*, and after that I also paid attention to many other parts of his immense oeuvre. In recent years, however, my special attention was again and again drawn to his fascinating *Confessions*. 'Augustine is a great charmer', one of my Utrecht University professors once stated. Indeed, I have found this to be true. Even if you don't agree with Augustine at all (just think of his horrific view that unbaptized children are damned to hell: not even his most strict Calvinist followers did accept this), he still captivates almost everyone who reads him. Certainly not in the least this applies to his *Confessions*.

Later in this book several reasons for this will be specified; here I only briefly mention some of them. I refer to his unique spirituality that has influenced people (Christians and non-Christians, even self-confessed 'atheists') for centuries and until today. I name his (at the time of the work's inception ca. 400) unheard-of adventure to record his past and present life, an enterprise that has been termed the first real autobiography. I point to his virtuoso Latin language skills and knowledge of the sources: all relevant Latin ones; more original Greek texts than previously assumed; not least his use of the biblical writings as 'his new Christian classic', to borrow a word from Peter Brown's still impressive biography. I also mention the philosophical implications that Augustine's thinking had for virtually everyone in the Middle Ages, for nearly all sixteenth century Reformers (both Protestant and Roman Catholic), for theologians and other literati in the seventeenth century ('le siècle de saint Augustine'), for modern philosophers from Heidegger and Wittgenstein to Hannah Arendt and beyond.

But then, again and again, there is the work that is—still rather mysteriously—called the *Confessions*. Over the years it has become increasingly clear to me that one of the many angles from which to understand this classic of world literature is Augustine's former Manichaeism. Shortly before 2008 I became aware of the first contours indicating that Augustine seems to conceal his profound knowledge of the teachings (and writings!) of his former co-religionists in the debate with the Manichaean presbyter Fortunatus. Almost at the same time I discovered that the *Confessions* testify to a thorough knowledge of the 'Gnostic' variety of Christianity he had espoused for more than a decade. These discoveries (at the time mainly preliminary indications based on a number of obvious data) were expressed in essays such as 'Heeding and

Hiding Their Particular Knowledge? An Analysis of Augustine's Dispute with Fortunatus' (2008, adapted and updated in *Mani and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston 2020) and 'The Young Augustine's Knowledge of Manichaeism: An Analysis of the *Confessions* and Some Other Relevant Texts' (*Vigiliae Christianae* 2008, revised and updated in *Mani and Augustine* 2020). Several more specific studies followed. An important impetus was given by the 'First South African Conference on Augustine of Hippo, University of Pretoria, 24–26 April 2012' for which several colleagues travelled to South Africa's capital and the selected results of which appeared in the book *Augustine and Manichaean Christianity* in 2013. In its 'Preface', the outcome of the contributions was presented under the sub-heading 'A Testimony to a Paradigm Shift in Augustinian Studies?'. While colleagues in this book and in their other publications explored Manichaean traces found, for example, in Augustine's Christology (and consequently in his 'spirituality'), in works such as *Against Faustus*, *On Order* and *On the true religion*, in his typical speaking of 'the Few and the Many' and in his views on the vision of God, others (and sometimes their *promovendi*) continued the trail of exploring the *Confessions*.

The ten chapters of this book comprise most of my own explorations. I certainly do not opine that the investigations presented here in their final form are the last word, but I do hope that they will be useful in further research. For many decades it has been argued—even taken for granted by many specialists—that the most important influences in Augustine's development (besides, of course, his increasing knowledge of and familiarity with the biblical writings) came from Neoplatonism. To the best of my ability, I have studied and evaluated these 'Neoplatonic traces' mentioned in several outstanding publications. I will certainly not deny that such influences did exist, nor that Augustine himself occasionally mentions the positive role of 'the Platonists' in his intellectual quest (see, e.g., ch. 6 in this book). But much deeper (although hardly ever openly professed!) was, in my opinion, the enduring influence of the Gnostic-Christian religion of his youth and adolescence. This influence manifests itself in Augustine in a 'positive' way when he adopts features and expressions typical of this form of Christianity, but more often in a 'negative' manner when he opposes the Manichaeans of his past and present.

In fact, this twofold form of 'influence' constitutes the common pattern of the successive chapters that cover almost the entire *Confessions*. Together with the last two chapters, which mainly deal with other aspects of the rich work as a whole, this book aims to provide a next step towards and thus hopefully provide a fruitful impetus for a new commentary. While working on this project, it has become crystal clear to me that a truly comprehensive commentary

on the entire *Confessions* can only be successfully accomplished by a diverse team of specialists. It is also for this reason that the subtitle of this book is *Ten Studies*: these are thematically related studies of central passages, in the hope that an attempt will be made to write a new full commentary in the near future.



For the quick orientation of the reader, I give here a summary of the successive chapters.

The first one reviews the two types of spirituality present in Augustine's *Confessions*, i.e., on the one hand, his former Manichaean-Christian belief and its practices and, on the other hand, his newly won Catholic-Christian mindset. More than ever seen, throughout the *Confessions* both forms of spirituality appear to be engaged in a breath-taking dialogue. Many examples of this unexpected discourse are given in the course of this chapter. I argue that the most famous work of Augustine should be read anew from its original perspective.

Based on analyses of a number of Augustinian texts (mainly *conf.* 3,10–11 and *c. Faust.* 20,9) and a whole range of Manichaean sources, my second chapter seeks to answer the difficult question: did Augustine get acquainted with Mani's *Picture Book*? After considering the various options and objections, my answer is in the affirmative: in all likelihood Augustine knew Mani's *Icon* (*Picture*, *Ārdahang*). It is in the *Confessiones* (i.e., apart from 3,10–11 perhaps also in 4,24 where he tells about his 'lost' *De pulchro et apto*) that he gives some important indications—but only for the initiated. Based on the passages just mentioned from Augustine's oeuvre, it even seems possible to provide clues about the likely subjects depicted in Mani's *Icon*.

Augustine is known to many as 'the son of tears'. In my third chapter I search for the meaning of this expression. Based on *conf.* 3,21, first the background of the African bishop who spoke the well-known words is analysed. Not only had he been handed over to the Manichaeans as an oblate, but he had also become acquainted with their writings. Especially from this experience he gives his advice to Monnica: her son will come to the right insight *legendo*, i.e., by reading Manichaean texts. From Manichaean texts discovered in modern times, some characteristic elements of *conf.* 3,21 and especially the expression 'filius *istarum* lacrimarum' appear in a new light.

The fourth chapter consists of a rather brief note interpreting the curious word '*substomachans*' in *conf.* 3,21 from the Manichaean background of both Monnica's bishop and Augustine. Based on this interpretation, I propose a new

translation of the phrase in which ‘*substomachans*’ occurs. My understanding seems to be backed by Julian of Eclanum’s use of ‘*substomachans*’. In essence, ‘*substomachari*’ appears to refer to the ‘*ructare*’ during the Manichaeans’ daily ritual meal: ‘to belch (out)’. If this interpretation is correct, it sheds new light on the character and conspicuous conduct of a former Manichaean now serving as a Catholic bishop.

The fifth chapter focuses on Augustine’s lost work *De pulchro et apto*. All we know about the work is from *conf.* 4,20–27, where Augustine slightly lifts the veil that hangs over its contents. I examine the possible subject matter of *De pulchro et apto* within the context of its author’s former Manichaeism. Apart from the *Confessiones*, other works of Augustine seem to shed light on his first book, but most important to unravel its topics appear to be some genuine Manichaean sources. My search for the contents of *De pulchro et apto* ends up with twelve conclusions.

When reading through the *Confessions*, one notices a striking variety of descriptions of God. The aim of the sixth chapter is to discern and—as far as possible—to interpret these various descriptions. My main focus is on pivotal texts from Books 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7. They document how much Manichaean views played a part in Augustine’s quest, and how closely this quest was linked to his ideas about evil. Briefly stated, his search went from anthropomorphic-spatial thinking about God to corporeal/material-spatial and even panentheistic ideas and then (mainly under the inspiration of Neoplatonic philosophy, i.e., in all likelihood, Plotinus’ *Enneads*) to a strictly spiritual and non-spatial understanding. But in all this, Manichaean ways of thinking and even concepts remained present.

In the long and central chapter seven, I focus on the Manichaean elements in Augustine’s conversion story (*conf.* 8,13–30), i.e., both on those texts in which Manichaeism and its adherents are explicitly mentioned *and* on those characteristic components, expressions and figures in his *narratio* in which Manichaean teachings and concepts seem to play an important part. I argue that not only the Manichaean Bêma Festival and other confessional instances appear to be at the background of Augustine’s *narratio*, but also typical Manichaean concepts such as ‘the Call and the Answer’, ‘Jesus the Youth’, ‘the Maiden’, and so on. I wind up with ten conclusions, *inter alia* stating that—according to Manichaean thinking—the singing child in Augustine’s story represents Jesus, as does *mater* Monnica.

Chapter eight focuses on *conf.* 10,1–38. I open with an analysis of the typical (anti-)Manichaean elements in the first part of Book 10. After that I deal with Augustine’s search for God in memory. As in Manichaeism, the five senses are

considered as a means of acquiring knowledge of God. Augustine's subsequent exposition of memory (as the place where God can be found) shows striking parallels with the Coptic Manichaean *Kephalaion* 56. Moreover, the apex of Augustine's account of his search for God, i.e., his depiction of God as Beauty, has striking parallels in Manichaean texts as well.

In chapter nine, I first explore Augustine's conspicuous references to 'God's Hand' in the *Confessions* by presenting a fresh translation and brief commentary of all the relevant passages. In the commentary, special attention is given to the possible significance of these texts to (former) Manichaean readers. I conclude that Augustine's eye-catching imagery is not only inspired by biblical language and—in all likelihood—by predecessors in the Christian tradition such as Irenaeus and especially Ambrose, but also strikingly coincides with a metaphor pivotal to Manichaean Christology and piety.

My final chapter discusses the many aspects of sin and concupiscence in the *Confessions*. I first analyse how these concepts function in Augustine's narrative of his early years and then explore the story of his early and later adolescence. From several references in Books 3 and 4, I conclude that Augustine had strong—albeit temporary—homo-erotic feelings. The following books evidence his persistent longing for *concubitus* with a woman, which was first experienced with his 'Una' and later in any case with an interim concubine. His sinful concupiscent desire (several times referred to as his 'disease') even beset the monk and bishop Augustine at the time he wrote his literary masterpiece, for in Book 10 he conspicuously confesses nocturnal emissions caused by his sex dreams. Although specifically in the later parts of Book 10 (esp. 10,41 ff.) Augustine describes *concupiscentia* as having a rather broad spectrum of meanings, its sinful sexual meaning is prevalent throughout the *Confessions*. The same appears to go for a related concept such as *libido*. All this leads to the conclusion that *confessio* in the sense of confession of *sexual* sins is an essential feature of the title and contents of Augustine's entire work.



In the course of my research for this book, I have experienced the help and support of a considerable number of dear colleagues and friends. Here I just mention, in alphabetical order: Jason Beduhn (Flagstaff, Arizona), Jacob Albert van den Berg (Groningen/Amersfoort), Majella Franzmann (Sydney), Therese Fuhrer (München), Iain Gardner (Sydney), Andreas Grote (Würzburg), Zsuzsanna Gulácsi (Flagstaff, Arizona), Gerhard van den Heever (Pretoria), Andreas Hoffmann (Siegen), Annemaré Kotzé (Stellenbosch), Sam Lieu (Cambridge),

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Abbreviations

acad.	De Academicis
adv. Iud.	Adversus Iudaeos
AL	Augustinus-Lexikon
APAW.PH.	Abhandlungen der preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse
Aug(L)	Augustiniana
b. vita	De beata vita
BA	Bibliothèque augustinienne
c. Adim.	Contra Adimantum
c. ep. Man.	Contra epistolam Manichaei quam vocant Fundamenti
c. Faust.	Contra Faustum
c. Fel.	Contra Felicem
c. Fort.	Contra Fortunatum
c. Iul. op. imp.	Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum
c. s. Arrian.	Contra sermonem Arrianorum
c. Sec.	Contra Secundinum
CCL	Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina
CFM	Corpus Fontium Manichaeorum
civ.	De civitate Dei (DCD)
CMC	Cologne Mani Codex
conf.	Confessiones
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DACL	Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie
DCD	see <i>civ.</i>
doctr. chr.	De doctrina christiana
duab. an.	De duabus animabus
en. in Ps.	Enarrationes in Psalmos
enn.	Enneaden
ep. Io. tr.	Tractatus in epistolam Iohannis ad Parthos
ep.	Epistulae
Gen. c. Man.	De Genesi contra Manichaeos
Gen. litt.	De Genesi ad litteram
haer.	De haeresibus
IAMS	International Association of Manichaean Studies
Io. ev. tr.	Tractatus in Iohannis evangelium
IPM	Instrvmenta Patristica et Mediaevalia

JbAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum
Keph.	Kephalaia
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
lib. arb.	De libero arbitrio
LSJ	Liddell, Scott, Jones, A Greek-English Lexicon
mag.	De magistro
mor.	De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum
MPL	Migne, Patrologia Latina
mus.	De musica
nat. b.	De natura boni
NHMS	Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies
NRTh	Nouvelle revue de théologie
PAC	Prosopographie de l'Afrique chrétienne (303-533)
Ps.Bk.	Psalm-Book, Psalm Book
pulch. et apt.	De pulchro et apto
RA	Recherches augustinienes
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum
RAM	Revue d'ascétique et de mystique
REA	Revue des études augustinienes, Revue d'études augustinienes et patristiques
retr.	Retractationes
RSPT	Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques
s.	sermo
SC	Sources chrétiennes
sol.	Soliloquia
ThDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament
TLL	Thesaurus Linguae Latinae
trin.	De trinitate
util. cred.	De utilitate credendi
VC	Vigiliae Christianae
VCS	Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae
ver. rel.	De vera religione
ZRGG	Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte

Gnostic-Christian and Catholic-Christian Spirituality in Augustine's *Confessions*

1 Introduction

*The study of the African-born Augustine (354–430) is in full swing. Letters written by him have been discovered that shed new light on his life and work.¹ Several recently found sermons provide unexpected and sometimes crucial information.² There seems to be no other figure in the history of the Christian church who receives as much attention in scholarship and popular press as this Berber son of Thagaste.³

Some twenty years ago a conference was held in his country-of-origin Algeria.⁴ On April 5, 2001, our group of scholars visited the remains of the ancient city of Hippo Regius at present Annaba. Local archaeologists said that large parts of the city where Augustine was bishop had yet to be excavated. Hopeful expectations were expressed about new finds in Hippo, the later visited city of Thagaste and not least about the impressive ruins of antique Madauros where Augustine began his rhetorical studies. The conference, organized by the

* First publication as 'Gnostic-Manichaean and Catholic Spirituality in Augustine's *Confessions*', *Religion and Theology* 29 (2023) 59–82, adapted and amended.

1 *Epistolae ex duobus codicibus nuper in lucem prolatae*, ed. J. Divjak, Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky 1981. New edition with translation and commentary in *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* 46B, *Lettres 1*–29**, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1987.

2 *Augustin d'Hippone. Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique. Retrouvés à Mayence, édités et commentés par François Dolbeau*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1996. I. Schiller, D. Weber, C. Weidman, 'Sechs neue Augustinuspredigten, 1–11', *Wiener Studien* 121 (2008) 227–284; *Wiener Studien* 122 (2009) 171–213. The first case concerns 26 sermons discovered in Mainz, the latter case six sermons discovered in Erfurt. Apart from the work of Dolbeau, the publication of (new and old) *sermones* and their study is conspicuously carried out by scholars such as S. Boodt, H.R. Drobner, A. Dupont and G. Partoens.

3 See e.g. W.H.C. Frend, 'A Note on the Berber Background in the Life of Augustine', *JTS* 43 (1942) 188–191; N. Benseddik, *Thagaste Souk Ahras (Algérie). Patrie de saint Augustin*, Alger: Inas Éditions 2005.

4 F.Z. Bouayed (éd.), *Actes du premier Colloque International Alger-Annaba, 1–7 Avril 2001: Le philosophe Algérien Saint Augustin, Africanité et universalité, sous le Haut Patronage de son Excellence Monsieur Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Président de la République Algérienne, Organisé par Le Haut Conseil Islamique, Algérie*, Tome 1–11, Alger: Publications du Haut Conseil Islamique 2004.

Haut Conseil Islamique d'Algérie, also underlined the current significance of the Church Father for Islamic thought. The event took place in the context of the year of the 'dialogue des civilisations' proclaimed by UNESCO. One can only hope that this consultation will be continued with the 'élan' expressed in those bright days of 2001.

The just mentioned discoveries, perspectives and (especially religious) dialogues are certainly not isolated cases. There is still much to discover in the immense oeuvre of this man from Africa, especially in the field of (religious) spirituality. Augustine was an *auditor* with the Manichaeans for at least ten years. Already in his time, these Gnostic Christians formed a worldwide church. Important discoveries have been made since 1900 from Algeria to China. Many unknown Manichaean texts have become available, as well as remains of Manichaean painting and miniature art, liturgy and music. Especially the finds in Egypt in the 1930s, in addition to the recently completed excavations in the Egyptian Dachleh oasis (about 900 km SSW of Cairo), prove to be of eminent importance.⁵ They provide unique opportunities to get a closer look at Augustine's 'hidden years', the period about which he is very silent on the one hand, but on the other—for those who read well—often says a lot.

Who these Gnostics were, I only indicate globally.⁶ They got their name from Mani, a Jewish-Christian prophet born in 216 near present-day Baghdad. He is, Augustine reports, also called Mannichaeus, with double n, because he pours out the heavenly bread *manna*.⁷ Augustine does provide very curious information with this. Until recently, the detail was even unique: it did not appear in any of the Manichaean texts that had come down to us. However, this has changed since the discovery in Egypt of the Mani Codex, a small parchment book written in Greek and purchased by the University of Cologne in 1969. Since its publication⁸ we know the correctness of what Augustine tells as it were 'en passant'. Mani's childhood and his early missionary journeys as a new 'apostle of Jesus Christ' are narrated in the Codex. It also describes Mani as the new Christ who 'pours out bread on his people'.⁹

5 See e.g. H.F. Teigen, *The Manichaean Church in Kellis*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2021; M. Brand, *Religion and Every Day Life of Manichaeans in Kellis*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2022.

6 Cf. e.g. J. van Oort, 'Mani and Manichaeism', in *idem*, *Mani and Augustine. Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2020, 3–18.

7 *Haer.* 46: '... geminata N litera, Mannich(a)eum uocant, quasi manna fundentem'.

8 First preliminary publication in 1970. Later e.g. L. Koenen & C. Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Kodex. Über das Werden seines Leibes. Kritische Edition aufgrund der von A. Henrichs und L. Koenen besorgten Erstedition*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag 1988.

9 CMC 107,18–20.

It is in the light of the many new discoveries that we are can (and indeed must) read the great African man of letters, philosopher and theologian Augustine with new eyes. Over thirty of his works, about a third of his total oeuvre of more than 5 million Latin words, are more or less emphatically directed against Mani and his Gnostic Christianity. Remarkably, however, there are still Augustinian specialists who believe they can understand one of the most important persons in world history without knowledge of this form of Christianity. One may wonder whether they do justice to the richness of Augustine's ideas in general and his spirituality in particular.

2 Augustine's *Confessions*

How new discoveries open up new perspectives, I want to illustrate with the example of Augustine's *Confessions*.¹⁰ What Manichaean Gnosticism is about will be discussed in the course of that illustration.

We take our starting point in Book 3, the passage in which Augustine tells where, when and how he became acquainted with the Gnosticism of the Manichaeans.¹¹ He is in Carthage, a young student who has just read Cicero's *Hortensius* and is gripped by higher aspirations. He is awakened from a (rather) debauched student life and with 'an incredible glow of the heart' he 'longs for the immortality of wisdom'. But only that 'love of wisdom' (*philosophia*) cannot really carry him along. 'One thing', he says characteristically, 'checked the fire of my enthusiasm (*in tanta flagrantia refrangebat*): the fact that the name of Christ was not there'. Christ's name had already infused his infant heart with his mother's milk and was preserved deep within him. For this reason, after getting acquainted with Cicero's *Hortensius*, he turns to the Bible. However, its reading disappoints him: the language, style and content of Scripture are not worthy of comparison with Cicero. He 'falls' among the Manichaeans.

The following passage contains a series of codes that, as it were, give a prelude to re-reading the entire *Confessions*. Augustine's work is both highly appealing and arcane; its thirteen books are often hard to understand and sometimes even permanently perplexing. Are the *Confessions* an autobiography; a conversion story; a writing in which *factum* and *mysterium* are interwoven; a work belonging to the exhortatory or 'protreptic' genre; an example, moreover, of interpretation of one's own book of life—Augustine as 'Everyman'

10 Quotes are from *Sancti Augustini Confessionum libri XIII quos post Martinum Skvella iterum edidit Lucas Verheijen*, Turnhout: Brepols 1990.

11 *Conf.* 3,10 ff.

being an image of every human being—and also of exegesis of Scripture? All these characteristics have a certain right.¹² What is new, however, is the perception that the *Confessions* can also (and not least) be read as a document in which Gnostic-Manichaean and Catholic-Christian spirituality are in breath-taking dialogue. A dialogue shrouded in the garb of a long prayer to God.

Let us first consider the information Book 3 provides. The author narrates his rather sudden transition to Mani's disciples as follows:

And so I fell (*incidi*) among men who were proudly raving. They were very carnal and loquacious. In their mouths were the snares of the devil and a birdlime compounded of a mixture of the syllables of Your name, and that of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Paraclete, our Comforter, the Holy Spirit. These names were never absent from their mouths. But it was only sound and noise of the tongue, for their heart was void of truth. They used to say 'truth, truth', and they had plenty to tell me about it, yet it was nowhere in them (cf. 1 John 2:4). But they uttered false statements, not only about You, who truly are the Truth, but also about the elements of this world, Your creation. Even the philosophers who said true things of those elements I should have passed by because of my love for You, my Father, Supremely Good, Beauty of all things beautiful. O Truth, Truth, how inwardly did even then the very marrow of my soul sigh for You when those people, so many times and in so many ways, sounded off about You to me by their voice alone and by many and huge books. And these were the platters in which to me, hungering for You, they, instead of You, served up the sun and the moon ...

And they also placed before me in those platters splendid phantasms (*phantasmata splendida*). Indeed, one would do better to love this visible sun, which at least is true to our eyes, than those false (phantasms) by which our eyes deceive the mind. And yet, because I supposed them to be You, I ate; to be sure, not with eagerness, because in my mouth You did not taste as You really are. For You were not *those empty figments* (*illa figmenta inania*).

Leaving aside what is reflexive and invective, we discover striking information in this quote. The followers of Mani are reported to speak trinitarian about God: Father, Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit. That information corresponds to all Manichaean texts: the Eastern, the Western and not least the newest ones from

12 See e.g. E. Feldmann, 'Confessiones', *AL*, I, Basel-Stuttgart: Schwabe 1986–1994, 1134–1193, esp. 1143–1153.

Egypt. Mani's Gnosticism was 'trinitarian' at first hearing; it was moreover fully Christian, the religion of the *veri Christiani*, the true Christians.¹³ It is striking (and phenomenologically correct) that Augustine neither here nor elsewhere sees the Manichaeans as non-Christians. He finds them haughty, foolish and insane (always an obvious pun on the name of Mani¹⁴), garrulous and so on. But he considers them Christian anyway. To distinguish himself from them he always calls himself a *christianus catholicus*.¹⁵

In addition to their 'trinitarian' concept of God, Augustine reports that they constantly say 'truth, truth: *veritas et veritas*'. This pretention is characteristic as well. It is already evident with Mani himself: at the beginning of his Gospel he proclaims himself—so we learn from the Cologne Codex—as 'I, Mani, apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God the Father of truth'.¹⁶ The same goes for his letter to Edessa, as is also revealed in the new Codex: 'The *truth* and the mysteries I unfold ...'.¹⁷ No less than twenty-two times the Codex speaks of the Manichaean Gnosis as the *alétheia*.¹⁸

In almost all Manichaean texts, 'truth' refers to the own Manichaean religion, based on the ancient and primal revelation now decisively proclaimed by Mani.¹⁹ As the *Qur'an* speaks of Muhammad, so the Manichaean (much older!) scripture of the *Kephalaia* found in Egypt speaks of Mani: both are the end point and final culmination in a long series of proclaimers of *the truth*.²⁰ The Manichaean *Psalmbook*, also found in Egypt, states in poetic imagery: 'Let us worship the Spirit of the Paraclete (= Mani). Let us bless our Lord Jesus who has sent to us the Spirit of Truth (= Mani)'.²¹

13 See e.g. Augustine, *util. cred.* 30 en 36; c. *Faust.* 26,2.

14 Mani's name in Greek (*Mánēs*) was often interpreted by his opponents as *Manéis*, the aorist participle passive of *maínomai* ('rage', 'to be furious', 'to be mad').

15 E.g. *util. cred.* 2.4.19.30 ff. 36; c. *ep. fund.* 4; *mor.* 2,28; often in c. *Faust.* This view is also found in various Greek and Syrian Church Fathers and in the Greek abjuration formulas: Manichaeans are heretical *Christians*. Cf. e.g. the chapters on Ephrem Syrus (by Robert Morehouse) and Chrysostom (by Chris de Wet) in J. van Oort (ed.), *Manichaeism and Early Christianity. Selected Papers from the 2019 Pretoria Congress and Consultation*, Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2021, 186–224 and 225–252. For the abjuration formulas, see e.g. R. Matsangou, *The Manichaeans in the Roman East. Manichaeism in Greek anti-Manichaica & Roman Imperial Legislation*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2023, *passim*.

16 CMC 66,4 ff.

17 CMC 64,8 ff.

18 Cf. L. Cirillo, *Concordanze del «Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis»*, Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane 2001, 17.

19 E.g. CMC 63,1 ff.

20 E.g. *Keph.* 9,11–16,31 and Q 33,40.

21 *Psalm* 223 in C.R.C. Allberry (ed. & transl.), *A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1938, 9,3–5.

The other data reported in *conf.* 3,10 are also brilliantly confirmed by original Manichaean manuscripts. The Manichaeans pretended to speak not only ‘the truth’ about God, but also about ‘the elements of this world’. Augustine here alludes to the very complicated (though largely familiar to him²²) Manichaean cosmology and cosmogony. Their dualism opposes two worlds of different substance. The world of light consists of five elements: ether, light, fire, water and wind. The world of darkness also consists of five elements: smoke, darkness, fire, water (not pure and clear, but with muddy mire), wind (not a pleasant breeze, but rather the desert wind *samum*²³). A little further on, Augustine even reports that the five elements of the kingdom of darkness are coloured differently by the five caves of darkness.²⁴

Another aspect in the quoted passage deserves special attention as well. Augustine says that the Manichaeans ‘sounded off’ (*sonarent*) to him about God ‘constantly and in various ways, by their words alone, and by many thick books’. Those books ‘were the platters in which to me, hungering for You, they, instead of You, served up the sun and the moon’. This is also significant information. We know that the Manichaean church had two main classes: the hearers (*auditores*) and the elect (*electi*). The auditors usually had to be content with what they were told in oral instruction and worship (*voce sola*); only the more advanced (and the *electi* in particular) gained access to the canon of Manichaean writings. Already here Augustine seems to indicate that he learned more than an ordinary *auditor*: he became acquainted with their books. It is no coincidence that he calls these books *fercula*, ‘platters’ in which the sun and the moon are served up to him.

The word *fercula* is deliberately chosen for at least two reasons. In Augustine’s time and world, a *ferculum* was on the one hand a tray or platform on which statues of the gods were carried around in a festive procession; the word is directly associated with idolatry.²⁵ But, on the other hand, it recalls the Manichaean sacred meal, as throughout the passage the words ‘hunger’, ‘thirst’, ‘taste’, ‘eat’, ‘be nourished’ and ‘food’ evoke this meal. On a kind of platters (so we know since the finds of splendid Manichaean miniatures and other images from the Turfan region of East Central Asia²⁶) the auditors offered vegetarian

22 See e.g. *haer.* 46,7; c. *ep. fund.* 28,31; c. *Faust.* 2,3–4.

23 H.J. Polotsky, ‘Manichäismus’, *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Neue Bearbeitung begonnen von G. Wissowa (...), herausgegeben von W. Kroll, Suppl. Bd. 6, Stuttgart: Alfred Druckenmüller 1935, 249.

24 *Conf.* 3,11.

25 Cf. *ciu.* 2,4.

26 E.g. Z. Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art in Berlin Collections*, Turnhout: Brepols 2001, esp. plates 36.1 (MIK III 4974 recto), 37.1 (M 559 recto) and 38.1 (M 6290 recto).

food every day to the elect, so that the particles of light hidden therein—the parts of the divine substance, of God—would be cleansed by their stomach and digestion. This daily ritual has sunk deep into the soul of the *auditor* Augustine; his imagery is imbued with it.

It has sometimes been argued that Augustine was not aware of the Manichaean meal. But then—so to speak—researchers let really ventriloquize the texts. At the beginning of Book 4, he tells very clearly what (at least) *nine* years²⁷ his life as a Manichaean hearer was like. In public he is the celebrated teacher and eloquent orator, in secret a Manichaean *auditor*. The so-called liberal arts—as the Catholic bishop now finds—gave vain fame and immoderation of lusts;²⁸ in order to cleanse himself of these taints, he, as an *auditor*, offered food for the *electi et sancti*, the ‘chosen saints’.²⁹ The fact that in Book 3 Augustine does indeed know the daily sacred meal in the background, he subtly indicates in a following passage:

Where were You then (when I was among the Manichaeans) for me and how far distant? For I was far away from You in a foreign land, devoid of even the pods of the pigs which I used to feed with pods.³⁰

One hears an echo of the parable of the prodigal son, the story from Luke 15 that often resonates in the *Confessions* and was well known to the Manichaeans and so many other Gnostics. Here, however, those ‘pig pods’ (*siliquae porcorum*) certainly do not refer to classical literature.³¹ Apparently Augustine had become bored by the texts he had to teach his pupils (the pigs!), a recent commentator noted.³² However, a high-level teacher like Augustine was not quick to call his students pigs.³³ ‘Pigs’ here are no other than the Manichaean *electi* he used to bring their divine food (not coincidentally called ‘pods’ here).³⁴

27 E.g. *conf.* 4,1.

28 *Conf* 4,1.

29 Those saints, Augustine continues in *conf.* 4,1, from that food ‘fabricated in the workshop of their stomachs angels and deities for our liberation’.

30 *Conf* 3,11.

31 B. Blumenkranz, ‘*Siliquae porcorum* (cf. Luc. xv, 16). L'exégèse médiévale et les sciences profanes’, *Mélanges ... Louis Halphen*, Paris: PUF 1951, 11–17, indicates how Origen, Ambrose, Jerome and Augustine have generally regarded the ‘pig pods’ as meaning the profane literature.

32 H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine, Confessions, translated with an introduction and notes*, Oxford: OUP 1991¹, 42 n. 20.

33 Augustine is negative about his students only in *conf.* 5,14 (cf. also 3,6), but a word like ‘pigs’ is never mentioned.

34 For pods or lentils (*lenticulae*) as the actual food of the Manichaean ‘elect’, see Augustine’s *mor.* 2,41 and 66 (cf. below).

3 Augustine and the Gnostic-Manichaeian Concept of God

Central to the Gnostic spirituality of the Manichaeians is their material concept of God on the one hand, and their sacred meal on the other. God with the whole divine world as his realm consists of fine light substance. The aim of world history is to purify the light particles trapped in matter. The sacred meal plays a central role in this.

These two aspects of Manichaeian-Gnostic spirituality (on the one hand a substantially material concept of God; on the other hand a heavy emphasis on the meal as a central and even primordial event) are repeatedly discussed in Augustine's *Confessions*. Its frequency and essentiality even lead me to characterize this writing as a document *defined* by Manichaeism. Much more than we knew until recently, the Catholic bishop had his former co-religionists in view when writing. Sometimes (as in Book 3) he mentions their opinions explicitly, but even more often implicitly in all sorts of subtle allusions. One can go a step further: even positively, for his own mystical spirituality, for his speaking about God and his 'self', Augustine takes sayings and thoughts from his Manichaeian past and transfers them into the spirituality of the Catholic Church and all its related (certainly also Protestant and not least Evangelical) movements. Through Augustine, Gnostic Manichaeism has resonated until today.

Let us first consider the Gnostic-Manichaeian concept of God. What it meant for Augustine, he says clearly in the just discussed passage from Book 3. To him, the hungry and thirsty for truth, platters have been offered by Mani's followers, but they contain only *phantasmata splendida*, splendid representations of the imagination. These void images from Manichaeian mythology about God and his diffusion in the cosmos are *eaten* by Augustine.³⁵ After all, he does not seek God with his spirit, but with the bodily senses.³⁶

I did not know that God is spirit, not a being with limbs (*membra*) in length and breadth, nor a being whose existence is material mass, for material mass (*moles*) is smaller in its part than in its whole and, if infin-

35 The passage *conf.* 3,10 speaks not only of *manducabam* ('I ate'), but also mentions strikingly: 'You did not taste' (*nec sapiebas*), 'I was not fed' (*nec nutriebar*), 'food in dreams' (*cibus in somnis*), 'foods which one takes while awake' (*cibus vigilantium*), 'with such void food I then fed myself and did not feed myself' (*qualibus ego tunc pascebar inanibus et non pascebar*).

36 *Conf.* 3,11: '... cum te non secundum intellectum mentis (...), sed secundum sensum carnis quaererem'.

ite, smaller in some part bounded by a definite space than in its infinity; nor is it complete everywhere, as a spirit is, as God is.³⁷

It is noticeable that Augustine begins his *Confessions* with such considerations. Is God material-substantial? Do heaven and earth contain God? Is not He bigger? But how?³⁸ A classical author such as Augustine usually expresses the main subject of book in its preface (*prooemium*). The *Confessions* deal with the question of who God is and directly connected with it who man is. The problem of the knowledge of God takes precedence and it is dealt with in the first instance from Manichaean questioning points of view. First answers are also heard in the beginning of the *Confessions*. With regard to God, his greatness is first of all expressly stated:

Great are You, Lord, and highly to be praised; great is Your power, and Your wisdom is beyond measure.³⁹

It is significant that out of many hundreds of psalm texts these verses have been chosen.⁴⁰ For years, Augustine as a Manichaean *auditor* invoked God as the Father of Greatness;⁴¹ here he deliberately mentions (with quotations from the OT rejected by the Manichaeans) the greatness of the biblical God. He also knows that Mani's followers speak of Christ as God's power (*virtus*) residing in the sun and as God's wisdom (*sapientia*) residing in the moon.⁴² The opening sentence provides an antithetical answer to this Manichaean belief as well. Evidently anti-Manichaean is also the repeated mention that mortal man is 'a part of God's creation' (*portio creaturae tuae*).⁴³ In all likelihood the famous

37 *Conf.* 3,12.

38 *Conf.* 1,1–3.

39 *Conf.* 1,1: 'Magnus es, domine, et laudabilis valde: magna virtus tua et sapientiae tuae non est numerus'.

40 See especially Ps. 144 (145):3 and for the second quote Ps. 146 (147):5.

41 Cf. e.g. *Psalm-Book* (ed. Allberry) 133,2–3: 'The Father of Greatness is worthy of all glory, the King, the God of Truth'; *Psalm-Book* 191,13: 'Glory and honour to Amen, the Father of Greatness'; etc. Cf. e.g. *Kephalaia* 7: 'The first Father is the Father of Greatness, the blessed one of glory; the one who has no measure to his greatness ...' (ed. & transl. H.J. Polotsky & A. Böhlig, *Kephalaia*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1940, 34,21–22; English transl. I. Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2020², 38); *Keph.* 24 (Polotsky & Böhlig 71,24; Gardner 73); etc.

42 Cf. e.g. c. *Faust.* 20,2.

43 According to the Manichaean myth, the first man Adam—though created in the image of the Third Envoy (and thus indirectly in God's image)—is a product of demonic activity. Especially his mortal body is evil and possessed by sexual desire.

phrase 'Our heart is restless until it rests in You' evokes the central Manichaean theme of rest.⁴⁴ The idea that in one's ignorance (*nesciens* versus the Manichaean pretension to know everything) one can invoke another being instead of the true God (*aliud enim pro alio postest invocare nesciens*) undoubtedly indicates the now strongly rejected Manichaean concept of God.⁴⁵ And, for example, by the 'talkers' (*loquaces*) about God who are in fact 'mute' (*muti*), Augustine already at the beginning of his book means the followers of Mani.⁴⁶

If the opening passage of the *Confessions* has such a thematic-indicative function, the obvious question is how this becomes apparent in the rest of the book. Let me illustrate this with some examples. What still matters first of all is Augustine's understanding of God. He says in many places that the Manichaean concept of God captivated him for years; so he extensively and emphatically states, for example, in Book 4.⁴⁷ In Book 4 he also lifts part of the veil that lies over the first work he wrote, but which has been lost to us—and most curiously even to himself—namely the books on Beauty and Harmony: *De pulchro et apto*.⁴⁸ Augustine authored the work as a Manichaean; Manichaean themes in general and not least the question of how to think of God substantially and materially comprise its content. In Book 5 he describes his meeting with the Manichaean bishop Faustus (whom he finds sympathetic and with whom he is in close contact) and then his own departure for Rome; for that same time he also reports his material view of God as substance.⁴⁹ Emphatically, the problem associated with the Manichaean concept of God returns in Book 7, from its beginning. In that book Augustine also says:

By inner torments You stirred me to be impatient until, *by inward perception*, You were a certainty to me.⁵⁰

44 On rest (e.g. *anápausis*) according to the Manichaeans, see J. Helderman, 'Zum Dokerismus und zur Inkarnation im Manichäismus', in A. Van Tongerloo & S. Giversen (eds.), *Manichaica Selecta* (FS J. Ries), Leuven: IAMS 1991, 120–123, with proper reference (123) to *conf.* 1,1.

45 *Conf.* 1,1.

46 *Conf.* 1,4: 'Et vae tacentibus de te, quoniam *loquaces muti sunt*'.

47 E.g. *conf.* 4,3: Augustine thinks of God only as 'corporeal brilliances' (*fulgores corporeos*); in his Manichaean time he set his hopes on a *phantasma* (4,9; cf. 4,12); he thought God not solid and fixed (*solidum et firmum*) (4,12); he imagined God as an immense luminous body (*corpus ... lucidum et immensum*) and himself as a particle (*frustum*) of that body (4,31).

48 *Conf.* 4,20–27. Cf. ch. 5.

49 *Conf.* 5,20.

50 *Conf.* 7,12: 'Et stimulis internis agitabas me, ut impatiens essem, donec mihi *per interiorem aspectum* certus esses'.

That certainty comes first of all through a spiritual understanding of God that is presented to him by Neoplatonic books.⁵¹ In that context, too, Augustine explicitly mentions his difficulties with the Manichaean concept of God.⁵²

But also, long after the conversion events in Milan, long after a spiritual concept of God as professed in the Neoplatonic Christian circle around Ambrose has ushered in a tremendous spiritual liberation for him, Book 10 raises the question of the how of God's existence. In short, the answer is: the Eternal is not identical with what we perceive through our bodily senses: from the vision of the outer world, we must turn inward to the soul and through that soul ascend to God:

Do not go out, turn in to yourself, in the inner person dwells the Truth.⁵³

The way Augustine discovered to arrive at knowledge of God is ultimately the way of Neoplatonic mysticism; the result, however, becomes fully Christian with the major *tolle lege* event in Book 8.⁵⁴ However, the wording remains remarkable. The quest that began in Book 1 is resumed thematically and emphatically in Book 10; there the summit reached in Milan in 386 is reflected in retrospect as follows:

Late have I loved You, o Beauty so ancient and so new. Late have I loved You. And see, You were within⁵⁵ and I without, and there did I seek You. I, deformed, I plunged into those fair things which You made. You were with me, but I was not with You! Those things kept me far from You, which unless they had their existence in You, had no existence at all. You called and cried aloud and forced open my deafness. You did gleam and shine and chase away my blindness. You were fragrant and I drew in my breath, and now pant for You. I have tasted You, and I feel but hunger and thirst for You. You touched me and I am set on fire for Your peace.⁵⁶

Reference has been made to Neoplatonic parallels for this passage; there are undoubtedly such parallels, but they are quite weak. Biblical imagery is not

⁵¹ *Conf.* 7,13 ff.

⁵² *Esp. conf.* 7,20.

⁵³ Thus, Augustine succinctly puts it in *uera rel.* 39,72: 'Noli foras ire, in te ipsum redi; in interiore homine habitat veritas'.

⁵⁴ See ch. 7.

⁵⁵ That is: inside me, in my inner being or 'self'.

⁵⁶ *Conf.* 10,38.

decisive either. Augustine speaks about hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, touching. What does he mean and why this terminology? A little earlier in Book 10 we find his answer to this question:

But what is it that I love when I love You? Not corporeal beauty nor the splendour of time, not the brightness of light (see, how dear to our earthly eyes), not the sweet melodies of songs of all kinds, not the fragrant smell of flowers and ointments and spices, not manna and honey, not limbs (*membra*) pleasant to the embracement of the (bodily) flesh. I love not these things when I love my God. And yet I love a certain kind of light, and sound, and fragrance, and food, and embracement when I love my God—the light (*lux*), sound (*vox*), fragrance (*odor*), food (*cibus*) and embracement (*amplexus*) of my inner being. There (in my inner being) that light shines to my soul that no place can contain; there that sound is heard that time snatches not away; there is a fragrance that no breeze disperses; there is a food that no eating can diminish; there is an attachment that no satiety can part. This is what I love, when I love my God.⁵⁷

Plotinus wrote about God as beauty.⁵⁸ The mystical idea of the five spiritual senses was known to Origen as early as the third century.⁵⁹ It need not be denied that elements from these traditions resound here. But the real source seems to be elsewhere and the title of the just mentioned lost work, *De pulchro et apto*, is already indicative. God and the divine world as beauty are a leading idea for the Manichaean Augustine;⁶⁰ long before he got to know Plotinus and the mystical tradition of the main Church, Manichaean spirituality conveyed this to him. Mani's disciples sing in their psalms and hymns of God's beauty: visible, audible, smellable, palatable and touchable by the senses.⁶¹ About those five senses (and in exactly the same order) Mani himself is said to speak in one

57 *Conf.* 10,8.

58 See esp. Plotinus' *enn.* 1,6 'On Beauty', which treatise most researchers assume Augustine read in the run-up to his conversion in Milan. On Augustine's use of this treatise, see e.g. P. Henry, *Plotin et l'Occident*, Louvain: Specilegium Sacrum Lovaniense 1934, 78–110, esp. 105–110.

59 E.g. K. Rahner, 'Le début d'une doctrine des cinq sens spirituels chez Origène', *RAM* 13 (1932) 113–145.

60 See above on *conf.* 4,20–27; cf. *mor.* 2,43.

61 E.g. *Psalm-Book* (ed. Allberry), nearly *passim*, but especially in the 'Psalms of the Bêma' (1–47) and the 'Psalmoi Sarakôtôn' (133–186).

of the *Kephalaia* or Chapters as they were discovered in Egypt in Coptic and may very well have been available in Latin as well.⁶² In the same context, it is also about memory as a repository of perceptions, surprisingly parallel with Augustine's famous exposition in Book 10.⁶³ Augustine, when he asks the question who God is, apparently opposes Manichaean terminology and at the same time adopts it and thus incorporates it into the Catholic mystical tradition. The Eternal is no outward radiance pleasing to the eye; no melody pleasing to the ear; no smell of flowers, incense, spices; no taste of manna or honey; no physical hug. But on the other hand, He is: visible, audible, smellable, tasteful and tangible *to the inner person*.

4 Augustine and the Gnostic-Manichaean Sacred Meal

What Augustine says in both passages in Book 10 evokes the other central aspect of Manichaean spirituality, which is directly linked to their concept of God as light substance: their sacred meal. From Augustine's own works, from many written Manichaean sources, but perhaps most beautifully through Manichaean art expressions (book miniatures, painted and embroidered textiles, wall paintings) we know much of how this meal was performed.⁶⁴ In these Manichaean pictures the daily offering of food (fruits like figs and melons with much light in them; bread white like manna) is depicted; one hears, as it were, the meal hymns accompanied by musical instruments; one smells the fragrant flowers; one tastes the sweetness of God. In one of the Manichaean psalms—they sound very 'evangelical'—it goes like this:

Taste and know that the Lord is sweet.⁶⁵ / Christ is the word of Truth: he that hears it shall live. / I tasted a sweet taste, I found nothing sweeter than the word of Truth. / Taste. / I tasted a sweet taste, I found nothing sweeter than the name of God. / Taste. / I] tasted a sweet taste, I found nothing sweeter than Christ. / Where is there a kind mother like my mother, Love (*agápè*)? / Where is there a kind father like my father, Christ? / What

62 See *Keph.* 56 (ed. Polotsky & Böhlig) 137,12–144,12, esp. 138,20–141,14; cf. Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 146–148.

63 Cf. e.g. *conf.* 10,12 with *Keph.* 138,20–141,14. See ch. 8.

64 Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art* (n. 26), the miniatures 36.1 (MIK III 4974 recto), 37.1 (M 559 recto) and 38.1 (M 6290 recto); cf. also 32.1 (MIK III 4979 verso) and 33.2 (MIK III 6257 verso).

65 This opening line forms the refrain, which is hereinafter referred to as 'Taste'; it reminds of Ps. 33 (34):9 (cf. 1 Peter 2:3).

honey is so sweet as this name, Church? / Wisdom (*sophía*) invites (*kaleîn*) you, that you may eat with your Spirit.⁶⁶

Besides, these psalms praise 'the manna of the land of light'⁶⁷ and also Mani's 'Great Gospel', 'his New Testament' as being 'the heavenly manna'.⁶⁸ One hears in them about milk, honey, pepper, and so on.⁶⁹

Whether Augustine knew these 'Psalms' is not yet conclusively proven: we know that he sang Manichaean songs,⁷⁰ but Latin versions have not yet been found. Perhaps, as in the last century, present-day North African Algeria will reveal new treasures; or else Rome where there was a large Manichaean community, and from which city we have the epistle of the Manichaean Secundinus.⁷¹ But even without Latin texts as final proof, it is clear that Augustine was very well acquainted with the spiritual teachings and life as expressed in the Manichaean psalms.

What he knows about their sacred meal is shown first and foremost in his book on the *mores* of the Manichaeans. This still little-studied work dates from the years immediately following his conversion and baptism in Milan; it was partly written in Italy and predates the *Confessions* for about a decade.⁷² Anyone who reads it will come across revelations that would not be out of place in present-day tabloids. In this anti-Manichaean writing the future Catholic bishop really speaks out about his former co-religionists, not always fair and sometimes very sarcastic. Especially their violation of the three seals of mouth, hands and lap has his detailed attention. Victorian translators sometimes found the stories (especially those about the seal of the womb focusing on the sexual aberrations of Mani's followers) so scabrous that they thought it better to avoid precise translation.⁷³ Augustine also informs in detail about the Manichaean

66 *Psalms-Book* (ed. Allberry) 158,18–28.

67 *Psalms-Book* (ed. Allberry) 136,38; cf. 139,58 and 181,37.

68 *Psalms-Book* (ed. Allberry) 139,55–58.

69 Milk in *Psalms-Book* (ed. Allberry) 54,28 (Jesus is the milk in all trees); 155,26 (Jesus as the son of the dew, milk of all trees, sweetness of the fruits); 190,24 ('Amen, merciful Mother, that gives her milk to us'); honey in 158,27 ('What honey is so sweet as this name, Church (*ekklēsia*)?'); honey and pepper in 184,13 ('... is sweet honey, burning pepper'); on manna see above; about flowers (also specified as roses and lilies) and about fruits almost *passim*.

70 Cf. *conf.* 3,14: 'et cantabam carmina'.

71 J. van Oort, 'Secundini Manichaei Epistula: Roman Manichaean "Biblical" Argument in the Age of Augustine', in *idem*, *Mani and Augustine* (n. 6), 322–334.

72 It is generally accepted that Augustine began the work *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae et de moribus Manichaeorum* (= *mor.* 1 and *mor.* 2) after his baptism in 387 in Rome and that he completed it in Thagaste in late 388 or early 389.

73 Cf. Ph. Schaff (ed.), *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian*

'seal of the mouth' (*signaculum oris*). As a real connoisseur and even a caterer he reports with unprecedented precision the required quality of the food and drink favoured by the Manichaeans. Truly as a cook or caterer—he uses such words himself⁷⁴—he must have once brought the Manichaean *electi* their daily meals. As a devoted *auditor*, he knew exactly what to provide for their sacred meal.

What then does Augustine tell? It is again strongly associated with the Manichaean concept of God and its related Gnostic spirituality. God is light substance: visible, smellable, palpable. Food and drink in which light is particularly present should be offered to the vegetarian elect for consumption. They will free the light elements from it. From the extensive menu of 'exquisite and rare fruits, on many different *plates* (*fercula*) and generously sprinkled with pepper' I mention only a choice: pears, figs, pods, mushrooms, rice;⁷⁵ no meat and absolutely no pigs.⁷⁶ All food and drink (various fruit juices) is selected on the basis of the three qualities of colour, smell and taste.⁷⁷ Besides, one sees and smells the divine light element *par excellence* in colourful and fragrant flowers;⁷⁸ that is why these—although not consumed—are also present at the sacred meal. The same goes for song and music: during the meals hymns are sung; music that caresses the ears is valued as coming from the divine realm of light.⁷⁹ Apart from colour, smell, taste and sound, the outwardly tangible form is also important: the congruence of the constituent parts points to beauty and thus to the special presence of the divine.⁸⁰ One hears an echo of the theme of Augustine's lost writing *On the Beautiful and the Harmonious*.

This daily Manichaean meal is prominent in several places in the *Confessions*: it is typical of Manichaean spirituality and anti-typical of Catholic-Christian spirituality. A fine example one finds at the beginning of Book 4. Augustine says how he 'was seduced for nine years and seduced himself, openly

Church, IV, Grand Rapids: repr. Eerdmans s.a., 65–89. Reprinted here is the translation by R. Stothert, first published in Edinburgh in 1872 and later revised by A.H. Newman.

74 *Mor.* 2,41: '... sed coquis et dulciariis ministris ...'.

75 *Mor.* 2, esp. 29–30; also e.g. 2,40.41.43.57.58 and 66.

76 *Mor.* 2,35–36; 2,41 and 2,53.

77 *Mor.* 2,39–40 and 41: 'An bona tria simul ubi fuerint, id est color bonus et odor et sapor, ibi esse maiorem boni partem putatis?'; cf. e.g. 2,43.

78 *Mor.* 2,39: '... unde doceatis in frumentis et legumine et oleribus et floribus et pomis inesse nescio quam partem dei', 41: 'Nolite ergo tantopere flores mirari atque laudare, quos iudicandos ad tribunal palati non potestis admittere' and 42: 'Siquidem est [sc. praesentia divinae partis] maxime in floribus ... quos certe flores habere in epulis non potestis ...'.

79 *Mor.* 2,46: '... dulcedo musica, quam de divinis regnis venisse contenditis ...'.

80 *Mor.* 2,43: 'An pulchritudo vos movet, non quae in suavitate coloris est, sed quae in partium congruentia?'

by means of the so-called liberal arts (in his teaching of rhetoric he made no secret of his Manichaean opinions!), but secretly under the false name of religion; here haughty, there superstitious, everywhere vain and empty; here (in the field of the liberal arts) chasing void fame with the public, up to and including theatrical successes, contest poems, battle for straw wreaths, inane (stage) performances and uncontrolled lusts; but there (as *auditores*) we desired to purify ourselves from those taints by bringing food to those who were called elect and saints (*electi et sancti*), that they might manufacture therefrom for us in the workshop of their stomachs angels and deities, for our liberation. And such things I pursued and practiced with my friends, who were deceived by and with me.⁸¹ (...) Permit me, he continues, 'to go once more through the former circuits of my error, and bring You the *offering* of praise (*et immolare tibi hostiam iubilationis*)'.⁸²

5 Augustine's *Confessions* as an Offering (*hostia, sacrificium*)

The *Confessiones* are an offering to the true God; they take the place of the *auditor's* work of old. Now he enjoys God as 'the (spiritual) food that knows no corruption'.⁸³ And even as the *true* 'milk': unexpectedly a feminine image of God arises in the bishop's mind, which he no doubt came to know among the Manichaeans⁸⁴ and now uses in his opposition to them: 'If I am well, what am I different from one who sucks Your milk?'⁸⁵

Not only in the *prooemium* of Book 4, but also in various other books of the *Confessions*, imagery is present that directly recalls the Manichaean sacred meal. So in the introduction to Book 5: 'Accept the offering (*sacrificium*) of my *confessiones* from the hand of my tongue'.⁸⁶ The genre indicative expression is followed by a discussion of Manichaean themes and continued by the rather long report on Augustine's meeting with the Manichaean bishop Faustus. In Book 8 it reads in the first lines: 'You have broken my bonds: let me bring You an offering (*sacrificum*) of praise'.⁸⁷ Almost the same words, taken from Ps. 115 (Hebr. 116), return thematically at the beginning of Book 9.⁸⁸ Next in Book 9

81 *Conf.* 4,1.

82 *Ibidem.*

83 *Ibid.*

84 See above, n. 69, esp. *Psalm-Book* 190,24.

85 *Conf.* 4,1: 'Aut quid sum, cum mihi bene est, nisi sugens lac tuum (...)?'.

86 *Conf.* 5,1.

87 *Conf.* 8,1.

88 *Conf.* 9,1.

there is a striking explanation of Psalm 4 which is even addressed *directly* to his former co-religionists.

But the most imposing example of sacrificing offering is perhaps Monnica. In the *Confessions* she is not only an image of the Church as a mother, widow and maidservant—*mater, vidua, ancilla*. She is also a type *and* anti-type of the Manichaean believer. About her, her son emphatically states that she ‘constantly gave alms, stood ready for Your saints (*sancti*) and ministered to them, and did not fail a single day to lay her *oblato* on Your altar’.⁸⁹

6 Augustine’s *Confessions* as a Spiritual Document

In conclusion: Augustine’s *Confessions* is a profound *spiritual* document that should be read from our new knowledge of Manichaean-Christian spirituality. A multitude of Manichaean texts and other artistic achievements provide the opportunity to see many passages in a new perspective. A perspective that to Augustine’s contemporaries—Manichaeans have also read his *Confessions*⁹⁰—was well known, but that the dust of the ages obscured from our view.

Some other new aspects may finally be indicated. There is, for example, that well-known but curious story of the pear theft about which Augustine makes so much and—so it seems—exaggerated comments.⁹¹ Seen from a Manichaean point of view, however, nothing seems overstated: pears with so much divine light substance, full of the suffering Jesus (*Jesus patibilis*), thrown to the pigs! In a different light comes Augustine’s frequent talk of fig trees and their fruits: a Manichaean regarded a fig as the divine fruit *par excellence*; he himself articulates in the *Confessions* his ‘foolish belief that a fig weeps when it is picked, and also that its mother, the tree, then weeps milky-white tears’.⁹² The Cologne Mani Codex now gives an explanatory insight from the perspectives of the Jewish-Christian sect in which Mani grew up: trees suffer pain; they lament; the innocent suffering creature groans (cf. Rom. 8:22).⁹³ This insight may also explain why that *African* bishop, who was once a Manichaean himself, tells mother Monnica that her child, adopted as an *oblatus*

89 *Conf.* 5,17.

90 See e.g. ‘*Secundini Manichaei Epistula*’ (n. 71), esp. 163. It is noticeable that in *conf.* 8,22 and 9,9 Augustine addresses the Manichaeans directly.

91 *Conf.* 2,9–18.

92 *Conf.* 3,18.

93 *CMC* 7,2–8,15; cf. e.g. *CMC* 98.

by the Manichaeans, cannot be lost as 'a son of *such tears*'.⁹⁴ The fact that tears are saving is first understood from a Manichaean context. Besides, the whole image of the sorrowful Mother of Life, lamenting the fate of her sons, occurs in the Manichaean *Kephalaia*,⁹⁵ just as the shining Youth who appears to Monnica in her dream evokes fully Manichaean images.⁹⁶ One can go on in this vein: counter-punctually Augustine evokes words, images, doctrines and actions from Manichaean mythology and daily practice which he puts at the service of his *Confessions*: the (right) hand extended by God has its antitype in the redeeming right hand of the myth and rite of the Manichaeans;⁹⁷ the divine voice—which is heard most clearly in the famous conversion story, but in fact throughout the book—has its antitype in the heavenly voice central to Manichaean spirituality.⁹⁸ The conversion story in Book 8 is entirely in the context of the Manichaean theme of the two natures and the two wills.⁹⁹ In Book 10, bishop Augustine describes in a conspicuous way the sensory pleasures that charm him: a contra-punctual exposition against Manichaean anthropology which is strikingly related by genre to the Manichaean *Confessionals*.¹⁰⁰ Books 11–13—which are not coincidentally an attempt at explaining the biblical book of Genesis that was rejected by the Manichaeans—also contain many reminiscences of Manichaean ideas.¹⁰¹ Near the end, the author describes explicitly—without naming the Manichaeans; he speaks only of the opinion of 'fools'—how according to Manichaean mythology the creation of this world took shape.¹⁰² Finally, as in the opening passage, the able rhetorician makes in the last sentences of his *Confessions* his clear allusions to Manichaean spirituality: God Himself is rest; who search will find.¹⁰³

94 *Conf.* 3,21. More in ch. 3: 'Monnica's Bishop and the "*filius istarum lacrimarum*".

95 *Keph.* 88 (Polotsky & Böhlig 147,25–30; Gardner 155).

96 Cf. for such a youngster e.g. Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art* (n. 26), 36.1 (MIK III 4974 recto). More on this Youth in ch. 7: 'Augustine's Conversion Story' (*conf.* 8,13–30).

97 Cf. ch. 9: 'Christ as God's Hand in Augustine's *Confessions*'

98 Cf. 'Augustine's Conversion Story' (n. 96).

99 *Conf.* 7,21–25.

100 *Conf.* 10,41ff.; cf. the confessional for *auditores* in J.P. Asmussen, *XUĀSTVĀNĪFT. Studies in Manichaeism*, Copenhagen: Munksgaard 1965, 167–199 as well as the one for *electi* in W.B. Henning, *Ein manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch*, Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften 1937.

101 *Conf.* 12,10 pertains to Augustine's Manichaean past and 'the peaceless' (*impacatores*) are the Manichaeans; again and again he emphasizes that the true God is also the (good) creator of this world; the 'songs of love' (*amatoria*) in 12,23 may be reminiscent of Manichaean songs such as the *canticum amatorium* mentioned in c. *Faust.* 15,5.

102 *Conf.* 13,45.

103 *Conf.* 13,53; cf. *conf.* 1,1.

7 Conclusion

In this way, the highly artistic work *Confessions* presents itself as a document in which two forms of spirituality are in a unique dialogue. Following a leading pioneer of spirituality studies, the work can best be described as 'a spiritual autobiography'.¹⁰⁴ It records the accomplishment of God's creative power in the human person, 'who would not be if You were not in me'.¹⁰⁵ One can also call this the mystic way.¹⁰⁶ The theme of 'God in me'—clearly interspersed at the beginning of the *Confessions* with the question: 'Am I in God then?'¹⁰⁷—is a universal spiritual topic, present in such philosophical movements as Stoa and (Neo)Platonism and all the major world religions of Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. But it is especially an essential notion in the so-called 'Gnostic' currents one finds in (or mainly on the margins of) Judaism, Christianity and Islam. As far as Christianity is concerned, Manichaean 'Gnosticism' should be mentioned in particular.¹⁰⁸ Apparently, to the influence of this last variant we owe the unique blend of Catholic and Manichaean spirituality that Augustine offers us in his most famous work which in its turn has inspired countless spiritual writings in later centuries.¹⁰⁹ I even venture to characterize Augustine's *Confessions* as the foundational document of Catholic Christian Gnosis.¹¹⁰

104 K. Waaijman, *Spiritualiteit. Vormen, grondslagen, methoden*, Gent-Kampen: Carmelitana-Uitgeverij Kok 2000, e.g. 882–885.

105 Cf. Waaijman, *Spiritualiteit*, 885 in his partial quote of *conf.* 1,2 (Latin, in full: 'Non ergo essem, deus meus, non omnino essem, nisi esses in me').

106 Cf. e.g. G. Bonner, 'Augustine and Mysticism' in F. Van Fleteren a.o. (eds.), *Collectanea Augustiniana: Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue*, New York etc.: Peter Lang 1994, 113–157; J. van Oort, 'Augustinus als mysticus', in K. Bouwman & K. Bras (red.), *Werken met spiritualiteit*, Baarn: Ten Have 2001, 155–168.

107 *Conf.* 1,2: 'An potius non essem, nisi essem in te, ex quo omnia, per quem omnia, in quo omnia?.'

108 Waaijman, *Spiritualiteit*, 332–336 briefly and aptly discusses the 'Gnosis', but in his book of almost 1000 pp. he nowhere mentions Mani and his worldwide Gnostic Christian church.

109 See e.g. P. Courcelle, *Les Confessions de saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire. Antécédents et postérité*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1963; A. Wilmart, *Auteurs spirituelles et textes devots du Moyen Âge latin*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1971 (first edition: Paris: Librairie Bloud et Gay 1932).

110 Cf. e.g. J. van Oort, 'New Light on Christian Gnosis (Nag Hammadi, Manichaeism and Augustine)', *Louvain Studies* 24 (1999) 21–39; *idem*, 'Augustinus en de katholieke gnosis', *Augustinus: 'wij zijn de tijden'*, Werkgroep voor Liturgie: Abdij van Berne, Heeswijk 2004, 50–53.

Augustine and Mani's *Icon* (*conf.* 3,10–11)

1 Rereading *conf.* 3,10–11

*A renewed reading of *Confessiones* 3,10–11 led me to return to the question of whether Augustine might have known Mani's *Picture Book*.¹ Years of study of Augustine's knowledge of Manichaean texts have convinced me that he knew a considerable number of these writings.² During his career, he increasingly disclosed this intimate knowledge.³ But does this even apply to Mani's *Picture Book*?

First, we look at the rather long and very informative paragraph *conf.* 3,10 in which Augustine describes his becoming acquainted with the Manichaeans when he was a student in Carthage:

Itaque incidi in homines superbe delirantes, carnales nimis et loquaces, in quorum ore laquei diaboli et uiscum confectum commixtione syllabarum nominis tui et domini Iesu Christi et paracleti consolatoris nostri spiritus sancti. Haec nomina non recedebant de ore eorum, sed tenus sono et strepitu linguae; ceterum cor inane ueri. Et dicebant: 'Veritas et ueritas' et multum eam dicebant mihi, et nusquam erat in eis, sed falsa loquebantur non de te tantum, qui uere ueritas es, sed etiam de istis elementis mundi, creatura tua, de quibus etiam uera dicentes philosophos transgredi debui prae amore tuo, mi pater summe bone, pulchritudo pulchrorum omnium. O ueritas, ueritas, quam intime etiam tum medullae animi mei suspirabant tibi, cum te illi sonarent mihi frequenter et multipliciter, uoce sola et libris multis et ingentibus! Et illa erant fercula, in quibus mihi esurienti

* First publication as 'What Did Augustine See? Augustine and Mani's Picture Book', *Augustiniana* 70 (2020) 183–202, adapted and amended.

1 Earlier but rather tentative remarks on the problem may be found in my recent *Mani and Augustine: Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2020 (repr. 2023), esp. in ch. 12 ('Augustine and the Manichaeans: Their Church, Books, and Impact', 190–206) and ch. 15 ('Young Augustine's Knowledge of Manichaeism: An Analysis of the *Confessions* and Some Other Relevant Texts', 221–244).

2 Apart from the just mentioned chapters 12 and 15, see also ch. 11: 'Manichaean Christians in Augustine's Life and Work', *Mani and Augustine*, 150–189.

3 Cf. e.g. the chapters 13 ('Heeding and Hiding Their Particular Knowledge? An Analysis of Augustine's Dispute with Fortunatus') and 16 ('Augustine's Criticism of Manichaeism: The Case of *Confessions* 3,10 and Its Implications') in *Mani and Augustine*, 207–216; 245–262.

te inferebatur pro te sol et luna, pulchra opera tua, sed tamen opera tua, non tu, nec ipsa prima. Priora enim spiritalia opera tua quam ista corporea quamuis lucida et caelestia. At ego nec priora illa, sed te ipsam, te, ueritas, in qua non est conmutatio nec momenti obumbratio, esuriebam et sitiebam. Et apponebantur adhuc mihi in illis ferculis phantasmata splendida, quibus iam melius erat amare istum solem saltem istis oculis uerum quam illa falsa animo decepto per oculos. Et tamen, quia te putabam, manducabam, non auide quidem, quia nec sapiebas in ore meo sicuti es—neque enim tu eras illa figmenta inania—nec nutriebar eis, sed exhauriebar magis. Cibus in somnis simillimus est cibus uigilantium, quo tamen dormientes non aluntur: dormiunt enim. At illa nec similia erant ullo modo tibi, sicut nunc mihi locuta es, quia illa erant corporalia phantasmata, falsa corpora, quibus certiora sunt uera corpora ista, quae uidemus uisu carneo, siue caelestia siue terrestria: cum pecudibus et uolatilibus uidemus haec, et certiora sunt, quam cum imaginamur ea. Et rursus certius imaginamur ea quam ex eis suspicamur alia grandiora et infinita, quae omnino nulla sunt. Qualibus ego tunc pascebar inanibus et non pascebar. At tu, amor meus, in quem deficio, ut fortis sim, nec ista corpora es, quae uidemus quamquam in caelo, nec ea, quae non uidemus ibi, quia tu ista condidisti nec in summis tuis conditionibus habes. Quanto ergo longe es a phantasmatis illis meis, phantasmatis corporum, quae omnino non sunt! Quibus certiores sunt phantasiae corporum eorum, quae sunt, et eis certiora corpora, quae tamen non es. Sed nec anima es, quae uita est corporum—ideo melior uita corporum certiorque quam corpora—sed tu uita es animarum, uita uitarum, uiuens te ipsa et non mutuaris, uita animae meae.

CCL 27,31–32 (ed. L. Verheijen)⁴

In the context of my inquiry, I first note that—during Augustine's first encounter(s) with the Manichaeans in Carthage—they 'frequently and repeatedly' spoke to him 'only in words *and* in their many and huge books': *uoce sola et libris multis et ingentibus*. It is important to be aware of this distinction: first⁵ the Manichaeans spoke to him 'only with words' (*uoce sola*), then⁶ 'also through their many and huge books' (*et libris multis et ingentibus*).

What could those books have been? Augustine initially says nothing specific about these books, only that the Manichaeans had 'many' books and that

4 *Sancti Avgvstini Confessionvm libri XIII*, qvos post Martinvm Skutella itervm edidit Lvcas Verheijen O.S.A., editio altera, Tvrmholt: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii MCMXC.

5 Or: on certain occasions.

6 On other occasions or subsequent to their oral message.

they were strikingly 'large'. All of this is well in line with what we know about the book art of Mani's followers: they were famous for their very special books, some very large, others very small.⁷

Augustine says that these books functioned as 'the dishes in which they served up to me instead of You the sun and moon': *Et illa erant fercula, in quibus ... inferebatur pro te sol et luna. Fercula*, 'dishes', 'platters' may remind one of 'the many different dishes' (*multis ferculis uariatas*) that—according to Augustine in *De moribus Manichaeorum* 29—the Manichaeans consumed; in any case, the context in which he here in *conf.* 3,10 uses the word *fercula* is strongly 'alimentary': he hungered for God (*esurienti te*); he hungered and thirsted for God who is the Truth (*te ipsam, te, ueritas ... esuriebam et sitiebam*); he ate (*manducabam*) what the Manichaeans placed before him, but God did not taste (*sapiebas*) in his mouth as He really is and so he was not nourished (*nurtriebar*); the Manichaean provisions were like food (*cibus*) in dreams by which sleepers are not nourished (*aluntur*); 'such were the empty things I was feeding upon (*pascebar*) and was not being fed (*pascebar*)'. This 'alimentary' context continues in *conf.* 3,11: Augustine is the prodigal son from Luke 15 who 'was even denied the pods (*siliquae*) of the pigs (an obvious allusion to the Manichaeans, not his students ...!) which I (Augustine as a Manichaean *auditor*) was used to feed (*pascebam*) with pods (*siliquis*)'.⁸ Apart from the passing remark that he can 'transform a verse and a poem into real (i.e., spiritual) nourishment (*uera pulmenta*)', Augustine again stresses this 'alimentary' feature in his account at the end of *conf.* 3,11: the foolish woman of Solomon's allegory—here an image of the deceiving Manichaeans—invited by saying: 'Eat ... (*edite*) ... drink (*bibite*)'. 'And she seduced me, because she found me dwelling outside myself, seeing only with the eye of the flesh, and ruminating (*ruminantem*) in myself such [sc. food] as I had devoured (*uorassem*) by means of that eye'.

Instead of food that really nourished his search for God, Augustine—so he also tells in *conf.* 3,10—was presented with 'sun and moon' *by means of the Manichaean books*. I note again that his account first stresses the *speaking* activity of the Manichaeans (*in quorum ore; de ore eorum; tenus sono et strepitu linguae; dicebant; dicebant; loquebantur; sonarent; voce sola*) with regard to God, Jesus Christ, the Paraclete, in brief: their true opinion (*ueritas*) on all godly and related worldly matters; and that, from now onwards, Augustine recounts

7 See e.g. H.J. Klimkeit, *Manichaean Art and Calligraphy*, Leiden: E.J. Brill 1982; Zs. Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures: The Didactic Images of the Manichaeans from Sasanian Mesopotamia to Uyghur Central Asia and Tang-Ming China*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2016.

8 It was forbidden to him—as to all auditors—to eat from the food full of light substance offered to the elect for consumption and (through them) the liberation of the divine Light.

the communication of their message by means of books. In point of fact, they try to satisfy Augustine's hunger and thirst for God not anymore and alone with words, but with *images*. First, they 'brought in', 'carried in' (*in-ferebantur*, imperf.; litt.: 'they repeatedly brought along'), 'instead of You' (*pro te*) 'sun and moon' (*sol et luna*). But did they not speak about sun and moon as the divine 'bright ships'⁹ in their *oral* message? Such an activity is certainly not excluded, but even likely.¹⁰ However, in *conf.* 3,10 Augustine stresses that they did so by means of their books. Sun and moon, so he further reflects, are 'beautiful works of Yours', but not You (*non tu*), not God; moreover, they are corporeal works (*corporea*) and not spiritual ones (*spiritalia*), 'however luminous and heavenly they may be' (*quamuis lucida et caelestia*).

On the basis of the above, I conclude that—from their books—the Manichaeans first served up *images* of the sun and moon. That it was indeed *images* will become increasingly likely—and even evident—in the following: instead of *hearing* (*de ore eorum, dicebant*, etc.), Augustine from now onwards speaks of *seeing*: *istis oculis; per oculos; uidemus uiso carneo; uidemus; uidemus; uidemus* (all in 3,10); *in oculo carnis meae; per illum* [sc. *oculum*] (3,11).

Having mentioned the sun and moon which the Manichaeans served to him in his hunger for God, Augustine continues by relating: 'And they repeatedly also served up to me, in those dishes, splendid phantasms' (*Et apponebantur adhuc mihi in illis ferculis phantasmata splendida*). *Adhuc* here seems to mean 'also', 'besides' (although 'still' is a useful alternative), while *ad-pono* indicates some additional act as well; the imperfect *apponebantur* specifies that the act was repeated: 'they also/still kept placing before me, in those platters, splendid phantasms'; 'besides, they continually placed for me, in those dishes, splendid phantasms'.

According to Augustine's parlance, a *phantasma* is a visual image completely made-up by people's fantasy without any real basis (e.g. a mental image of your grandfather you never met); a *phantasia* is a mental image in your memory (e.g. of your father you really met).¹¹ Or, to illustrate with another example from Augustine's world and works: he imagines Carthage (where he lived for years) and this he considers a *phantasia*; he thinks Alexandria where he has never

9 Cf. Mani's *Thesaurus*, cited in e.g. Augustine's *nat. b.* 44 (*CSEL* 25,881–884): 'naues lucidas' (881; 882).

10 Cf. e.g. the statements and topical discussions in the Coptic *Kephalaia* (ed. Polotsky-Böhlig, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1940), 15; 25; 28; 36; etc. and also in their Manichaean *Psalm-Book*, Part 2 (ed. Allberry, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1938), 42; 55; 75; etc.

11 Cf. *mus.* 6,32.

been and calls this mental image a *phantasma*.¹² Indeed he has seen the sun and the moon and they have a basis in reality when he imagines them; but to represent them—as the Manichaeans do—as ‘ships of light’¹³ through which the redeemed divine light substance is transported to the realm of light is a *phantasma*.

However, the expression *phantasmata splendida* in *conf.* 3,10 apparently refers not only to the sun and moon, but also to other objects. From the *Confessions* already, and pre-eminently from the simultaneously conceived major work *Against Faustus*, it appears that Augustine often qualifies the Manichaean misconception(s) of God as being *phantasmata*.¹⁴ Time and again, just like here in *conf.* 3,10,¹⁵ he also blames the Manichaeans for their *phantasmata* to be *physical* objects.¹⁶ How can such *phantasmata* be associated with God who is purely spiritual? He considers such physical (‘bodily’) speaking about God to be eminently incorrect and blasphemous.

From Augustine’s own testimony we know that Mani, in his *Fundamental Letter*, spoke of God’s ‘splendid kingdoms that were founded upon the bright and blessed land’: *ita autem fundata sunt eiusdem splendidissima regna super lucidam et beatam terram*.¹⁷ Augustine had a very thorough knowledge of this *Fundamental Letter*, as he points out, for example, in his just quoted work *Against Mani’s Fundamental Letter* dating from about the same time (396/7) as *conf.* 3,10–11.

If we can rightly assume that the expression *phantasmata splendida* here relates to objects other than sun and moon (I see a strong confirmation of this viewpoint in the fact that they are further on in *conf.* 3,10 referred to as ‘colossal and infinite’: *grandiora et infinita*, qualifications difficult to apply to sun and

12 Cf. *trin.* 8,9; somewhat different in *c. Faust.* 20,7.

13 Cf. nn. 9–10 above and my further discussion of a passage from the seventh book of Mani’s *Thesaurus* below.

14 E.g. *conf.* 4,9 (*CCL* 27,44): ‘Et si dicebam: “Spera in deum”, iuste non obtemperabat, quia uerius erat et melior homo, quem carissimum amiserat, quam phantasma, in quod sperare iubebatur’; 4,12 (*CCL* 27,46): ‘... quia non mihi eras aliquid solidum et firmum, cum de te cogitabam. Non enim tu eras, sed uanum phantasma et error meus erat deus meus’; 7,1 (*CCL* 27,92): ‘Clamabat uiolenter cor meum aduersus omnia phantasmata mea ...’; 7,23 (*CCL* 27,107): ‘Et mirabar, quod iam te amabam, non pro te phantasma ...’. For *c. Faust.*, see n. 16.

15 *Conf.* 3,10 (*CCL* 27,32): ‘... falsa corpora ...’; ‘At tu ... nec ista corpora es ...’; ‘... phantasmatis corporum ...’.

16 E.g. *c. Faust.* 4,2; 5,11; 15,5 ff.; 20,7; 20,8 etc.

17 Augustine, *c. ep. Man.* 13 (*CSEL* 25,209). *Idem* in *c. Fel.* 1,17 (*CSEL* 25,877) and *nat. b.* 42 (*CSEL* 25,877): ‘ita autem fundata sunt eiusdem splendidissima regna super lucidam et beatam terram ...’.

moon, but in full accordance with the Manichaeon doctrine of God's vast and immeasurable kingdoms¹⁸), then we read the following section differently. I translate:

And they also placed before me, in those platters, splendid phantasms (*phantasmata splendida*). Indeed, one would do better to love this visible sun, which at least is true to our eyes, than those false [phantasms] by which our eyes deceive the mind. And yet, because I supposed them to be You, I ate; to be sure, not with eagerness, because in my mouth You did not taste as You really are. For You were not *those empty figments* (*illa figmenta inania*). So I was not nourished by them, but was more exhausted. Food in dreams is very like the food when we are awake, but those who sleep are not nourished by it, because they are sleeping. But those [empty figments] were not at all resembling You, as You now have spoken to me, because they were corporeal phantasms (*corporalia phantasmata*), false bodies (*falsa corpora*). Much more real are those actually existing bodies (*uera corpora ista*), whether celestial or terrestrial, which we see with our physical sight, just as the beasts and the birds do.

With regard to this passage, I accentuate that the *phantasmata splendida* from the beginning are referred to as *figmenta inania* a little later, which fact seems to be extra telling in our context. Of course, one may translate *figmenta inania* with 'empty fictions' or 'empty illusions', but *figmenta* can also be understood according to its most original and literal sense: a *figmentum* (from *finco*) is a 'form', an 'image', something 'moulded'. For Augustine the *phantasmata* are apparently real *figmenta*, that is to say: they are really represented in visible forms, *visible images*.

18 See e.g. *c. Faust.* 15,5, after the famous quote from the Manichaeon (or even Mani's?) *Amatorium canticum* in which God and his limitless surrounding aeons are described in a way that recalls the later Jewish Kabbalah, Augustine emphatically notes: 'How this deity can be immeasurable, when you say he is thus surrounded, you could never discover: *quem quomodo immensum faciatis, quem sic circumdatum dicitis, numquam inuenire potuistis*'. Cf. e.g. *c. Faust.* 20,7: 'For, gazing upon this light, which is visible and very familiar to all flesh, not merely of human beings but also of animals and worms, you increase the image (*phantasia*) formed from it to an immense size and say that it is the light in which the Father dwells with the inhabitants of his kingdom. For when have you distinguished the light by which we see from the light by which we understand? For you have never thought that to understand the truth was anything else than to think of bodily forms (*formas corporeas*), whether finite or infinite in some respects, and you do not know that they are empty figments of your imagination (*inania phantasmata*)'. Cf. *c. Faust.* 25.

Again, I translate, this time the whole passage and with full emphasis on what I believe Augustine—in veiled terms, but especially understandable to and recognized by his (former) Manichaean readers—says:

And they also kept placing before me, in those platters, splendid phantasms. Indeed, one would do better to love this visible sun, which at least is true to our eyes, than those false phantasms by which our eyes deceive the mind. And yet, because I supposed them to be You, I ate; to be sure, not with eagerness, because in my mouth You did not taste as You really are. For You were not those empty images (*figmenta inania*). So I was not nourished by them, but was more exhausted. Food in dreams is very like the food when we are awake, but those who sleep are not nourished by it, because they are sleeping. But those idle images (*illa*, i.e., the *figmenta inania*) were not at all resembling You, as You now have spoken to me, because they were corporeal phantasms (*corporalia phantasmata*, i.e. phantasms of *physical* things) and therefore false bodies (*falsa corpora*). Much more real are those actually existing bodies, whether celestial or terrestrial, which we see with our physical sight, just as the beasts and the birds do. We actually do see those things, so they are more certain than the images we form of them (*quam cum imaginamur ea*). And yet again, the images we form of those realities (*imaginamur ea*) are more certain than the pictures of other vast and unlimited entities we posit¹⁹ (*quam ex eis suspicamur alia grandiora et infinita*), but which do not exist at all. Such were the empty images (*inanibus*) with which at that time I was fed or rather was not fed.

But You, my Love, in whom I become weak that I may be strong (cf. Ps. 118:81 and 2 Cor. 12:10), You are not the bodies which we see, even if they are in heaven,²⁰ nor are You one of those things that we do not see there,²¹ for You have made them and do not even hold them to be among the greatest of Your creatures. How far, then,²² are You from those phantasms (*phantasmata*), phantasms (*phantasmata*) of bodies that do not

19 The verb *sus-cipere* also has the notion of ‘to look from below’, ‘to look upwards’! Cicero, so often followed by Augustine, uses the noun *suspicio* very characteristically in the sense of having ‘an imperfect conception’ of the gods (*deorum*).

20 I.e. such as the sun and moon.

21 The antecedent of *ista* evidently is *corpora*, here perhaps indicating the invisible angelic spheres.

22 Here again comes the distinction made by Augustine between *phantasmata* and *phantasiae*.

even exist! The representations (*phantasiae*) of the bodies that exist surpass them in certainty, and more certain than those [representations] are the bodies themselves, but still, none of these You are. Nor are You soul, which is the life of the bodies; for the life of bodies is better and more certain than the bodies themselves. But You are the life of every soul, the life of lives, You who live Yourself and do not change,²³ Life of my soul.

Before I summarize the above and formulate some conclusions, we also (re)-read the immediately following *conf.* 3,11. Here it runs:

Vbi ergo mihi tunc eras et quam longe? Et longe peregrinabar abs te exclusus et a siliquis porcorum, quos de siliquis pascebam. Quanto enim meliores grammaticorum et poetarum fabellae quam illa decipula! Nam uersus et carmen et Medea uolans utiliores certe quam quinque elementa uarie fucata propter quinque antra tenebrarum, quae omnino nulla sunt et occidunt credentem. Nam uersum et carmen etiam ad uera pulmenta transfero; uolantem autem Medeam etsi cantabam, non asserebam, etsi cantari audiebam, non credebam: illa autem credidi. Vae, uae! Quibus gradibus deductus in profunda inferi, quippe laborans et aestuans inopia ueri, cum te, deus meus—tibi enim confiteor, qui me miseratus es et nondum confitentem—cum te non secundum intellectum mentis, quo me praestare uoluisti beluis, sed secundum sensum carnis quaererem. Tu autem eras interior intimo meo et superior summo meo. Offendi illam mulierem audacem, inopem prudentiae, aenigma Salomonis, sedentem super sellam in foribus et dicentem: *Panes occultos libenter edite et aquam dulcem furtiuam bibite*. Quae me seduxit, quia inuenit foris habitantem in oculo carnis meae et talia ruminantem apud me, qualia per illum uorassem.

CCL 27,32–33 (ed. L. Verheijen)

Where were You then for me and how far? I was wandering far from You, even excluded from the pods of the pigs I fed with pods. Indeed, how much better are the fables of the grammarians and poets than those snares!²⁴ For a verse and a poem and ‘the flight of Medea’ are certainly of

23 Another allusion to the Manichaeans' misconception of God whom—according to Augustine, in particular in his disputations with Fortunatus, Felix and also in *Against Faustus*—they considered to be susceptible to change.

24 Already a Manichaean term, well known from e.g. Mani's *Fundamental Epistle* and the Coptic Psalm Book, used here by Augustine in an anti-Manichaean polemic setting, just as

more use than the Five Elements variously coloured (*fucata*) on account of the Five Caves of Darkness, which definitely do not exist²⁵ and kill anyone who believes in them. I can turn a verse and a poem into real²⁶ nourishment, but even if I sang of the flying Medea, I would not assert it to be fact; even if I heard someone singing the passage, I would not believe it. But those things²⁷ I believed. Woe, woe, by what steps was I dragged down to the depths of hell, toiling and boiling in need of Truth, when I sought after You, my God (to You I confess it, who took pity on me even when I did not yet confess); I was seeking You not according to the understanding of the mind, by which you willed that I should excel the beasts, but according to the sense of the flesh.²⁸ But You were more inward to me than my most inward part; and higher than my highest. I had stumbled upon that audacious woman, devoid of prudence, that enigma of Solomon, who sits outside on her chair and says: 'Eat with pleasure of the secret breads and drink the sweet stolen water' (Prov. 9:17). She seduced me, because she found me living outside, in the eye of my flesh, and ruminating in myself only on such [images]²⁹ as I had devoured by means of that eye.

This passage follows immediately after the previous paragraph and is in fact a unity with it.³⁰ Augustine goes on with the story of his search for God '*secundum sensum carnis*': according to the sense of the flesh'. As we have seen in *conf.* 3,10, this 'sense of the flesh' refers to his seeing with the eyes, which at the end of *conf.* 3,11 is repeated in the expression '*in oculo carnis meae*': [living] in the eye of my flesh'. As regards his first contacts with the Manichaeans, he now mentions a third element which—apparently also by seeing—becomes known to him:

not by chance Faustus in *conf.* 5,3 is described as 'a powerful snare of the devil (*magnus laqueus diaboli*)'.

25 They are *phantasmata*.

26 Sc. spiritual.

27 *Illa* refers to the five *elementa* ('elements'; also called the five *naturae* in *c. ep. Man.* 15 and 28 and the five *genera* in *c. ep. Man.* 30) and *antra* ('caves') just mentioned, all being *figmenta inania*.

28 Sc. by physical, i.e., visual sensation. Here, 'the sense of the flesh' (*sensus carnis*) immediately brings to mind the preceding *istis oculis*; *per oculos*; *uidemus uiso carneo*; *uidemus*; *uidemus*; *uidemus*, which recurs in *in oculo carnis* and *per illum* (sc. *oculum*) at the end of the passage.

29 I.e., images of splendid phantasies: *talia-qualia* refers to the preceding *illa* in 3,11, which *illa* in turn refers to the *phantasmata splendida* of 3,10.

30 As it was and still is one section in many editions, sc. chapter VI.

'the Five Elements variously coloured (*fucata*) on account of the Five Caves of Darkness'. It may be noted that *fucata* can also mean 'painted' (with the strong overtone of 'counterfeited!'). According to Augustine in *De haeresibus* 46,7 and *Contra epistulam Manichaei quam uocant fundamenti* 15, 28 and 30, the Manichaeans counted five *elementa* or *naturae* of darkness.³¹ Moreover, in an early letter to Nebridius and also in *De moribus Manichaeorum*, he speaks of the five caves (*antra*) of the race of darkness.³² Also elsewhere in his work *Against Mani's Fundamental Epistle* he hints at the presence of colour in the realm of darkness.³³

2 Conclusions from *conf.* 3,10–11

From the above, I conclude the following:

- (1) that the Manichaeans in their propaganda to Augustine made use of books (*libri*);
- (2) that these books complemented their oral message (*uoce sola et libris*);
- (3) that there were many of these books and that they were very large (*libris multis et ingentibus*);
- (4) that these books were placed before Augustine (*apponebantur*; cf. *inferebatur* and perhaps also *suspiciamur*);
- (5) that these books contained pictures of the sun and moon (*sol et luna*);
- (6) that, furthermore, these books contained pictures of splendid phantasms (*phantasmata splendida*);
- (7) that, in addition, these books apparently also contained coloured images of the Kingdom of Darkness (*quinque elementa uarie fucata propter quinque antra tenebrarum*).

31 See *haer.* 46,7 (CCL 46,314): 'Quinque enim elementa quae genuerunt principes proprios genti tribuunt tenebrarum, eaque elementa his nominibus nuncupant ...'; *c. ep. Man.* 15 and 28 (CSEL 25,212.229): 'haeque fuerunt naturae quinque terrae pestiferae'; *c. ep. Man.* 30 (CSEL 25,230): 'sed ista, inquit, genera quinque illas naturas inhabitantia saeua erant atque pestifera', the last three instances being quotes from Mani's *Fundamental Epistle*.

32 *Ep.* 7,4: 'quinque antra gentis tenebrarum'; *mor.* 2,14: 'malum esse quinque antra elementorum'.

33 *C. ep. Man.* 27 (CSEL 25,227): 'sicut ego concedo esse in eius [sc. the side of the land of darkness] colore aliquid mali ...': 'Just as I concede that there is something evil in its colour ...'.

3 Did Augustine Really See Mani's *Icon*?

If on the basis of the foregoing it may be concluded that the Manichaeans showed books with coloured illustrations to Augustine, the question arises: did Augustine really see Mani's *Picture Book* or were other illustrated books shown to him?

In *conf.* 3,10 Augustine speaks of 'libris multis: many books'. Of course, one may confine oneself to the notice—in itself already revealing for the Latin West and Roman North Africa in particular—that the Manichaean books presented to Augustine in Carthage contained images and that these images may have been coloured. Since the discoveries of Turfan and Tun-huang, many fragments of Manichaean manuscripts with beautifully coloured images have become known. We do not have any such tangible relics from the Latin West. The function of the illustrated manuscripts from Central Asia, however, is not as the function of the books in Augustine's report; nor is it known that these books with their illustrations were especially used in the conversion of outsiders to Manichaeism. The only book we know for sure it had this function is Mani's *Ārdahang* (*Ārdhang*, *Aržhang*) or *Eikōn* or *Image*, i.e., the *Picture Book* made by Mani himself to visually illustrate his message to persons to be initiated. We also know that there were several copies of this *Picture Book*, used by Mani's disciples in the same way as once did their master.³⁴

In my view it is possible and even likely that Mani's *Picture Book* was one of the *many* books shown to Augustine. Tradition has it that this book was used in combination with Mani's *Gospel*,³⁵ but also with Mani's *Book of the Giants*.³⁶ Several scholars have pointed out that, in the Latin West, the important place of Mani's *Gospel* (of which we do not have any fragments from Roman North Africa or elsewhere from the Latin-speaking world) appears to have been taken by his *Fundamental Epistle*.³⁷ Could it be that the content of one (or even several) of these Manichaean books was told to Augustine and that its subject matter was illustrated by images from Mani's *Picture Book*?

34 See e.g. Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, 72–73, with reference to the Parthian fragment M 5815.

35 E.g. M 5569 translated by J.P. Asmussen in Böhlig, *Manichäismus*, 100.

36 See e.g. Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, 72–72, again with reference to M 5815 in the translation by H.-J. Klimkeit, *Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia*, San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco 2000, 260.

37 As far as I remember, the first researcher who suggested this was E. Feldmann, *Der Einfluss des Hortensius und des Manichäismus auf das Denken des jungen Augustinus von 373*, Diss. Münster 1975, I, 337; cf. e.g. his *Die "Epistula Fundamenti" der nordafrikanischen Manichäer: Versuch einer Rekonstruktion*, Altenberge: Oros Verlag 1987.

Rereading *conf.* 3,10–11 from this possible perspective, I note that the Manichaeans appear to have placed before Augustine by means of their big books which functioned as platters: (a) one or more pictures of the sun and moon; (b) one or more pictures of *phantasmata splendida*, i.e. vast and unlimited (*grandiora et infinita*) entities meant to represent God; (c) one or more pictures of 'the Five Elements variously coloured on account of the Five Caverns of Darkness'.

When one compares these data with the data in the Latin quotes made by Augustine from both Mani's *Epistula fundamenti* and the *Thesaurus*—as far as we can see from his entire oeuvre, it is only these two writings of Mani he directly and emphatically quotes³⁸—the following may be noted:

(a) The seventh book of the *Thesaurus* speaks of the sun and moon as 'shining ships' (*lucidas naues; lucidae naues; lucidas naues*) and also of the sun as 'the brightest ship' (*in clarissima hac nauis; ex ista ... clarissima nauis*). This is done in the context of a fairly detailed exposition of the well-known 'Seduction of the Archons' myth. Further equivalents with the text of *conf.* 3,10–11 are missing in the *Thesaurus* quotes, although I remark that it runs in the same seventh book about the souls not redeemed in the lightships: 'Whatever still shows the stains of the adverse race goes down step by step (*particulatim descendit*) through the heat and glows,³⁹ gets mixed up with trees and other plants and all crops, and is stained with diverse colours (*et coloribus diuersis inficitur*).'⁴⁰ In other words, this is about the eschatological fate of the non-saved in the coloured Kingdom of Darkness. For the fact that there is colour in Darkness' Kingdom, one may compare Augustine's real insider's remark in *conf.* 3,11.

(b) However, the section *conf.* 3,10–11 seems to have much more in common with the *Epistula fundamenti*. The long *Letter* (Augustine calls it a *liber*)⁴¹ deals

38 Apart from the fact that also the *Letter to Menoch* and the *Amatorium canticum*, both quoted by Augustine (cf. *c. Iul. imp.* 3 and *c. Faust.* 15 respectively), may be genuine texts of Mani himself.

39 *Per aestus atque calores*, i.e. of sexual concupiscence.

40 Augustine, *nat. b.* 44 (CSEL 45, 883): 'Id uero, quod adhuc aduersi generis maculas portat, per aestus atque calores particulatim descendit atque arboribus ceterisque plantationibus ac satis omnibus misceretur et coloribus diuersis inficitur'. The same passage in the same long quote from the seventh *Thesaurus* book is in Evodius, *De fide contra Manichaeos* 16 (CSEL 25, 957). Cf. the new edition by A. Vanspauwen, *In Defence of Faith, Against the Manichaeans. Critical Edition and historical, literary and theological Study of the Treatise Adversus Manichaeos, attributed to Evodius of Uzalis* (IPM 79), Turnhout: Brepols 2020, esp. 339–403.

41 *C. ep. Man.* 5 (CSEL 25, 197): 'Uideamus igitur, quid me doceat Manichaeus, et potissimum illum consideremus librum, quem Fundamenti epistolam dicitis ...'. Cf. e.g. *c. ep. Man.* 10 (*in fine*); 11 and 28.

with ‘the beginning, the middle and the end’⁴² and thus provides an overview of the history of the universe (including origin, fall, and redemption). Since it deals with the essence of Manichaeism, it is quite conceivable that the *Fundamental Letter* functioned in the Manichaean mission. From the contents handed down to us,⁴³ I highlight that, in any case, the *Letter* states that God the Father has twelve members of Light while in each of these members thousands of countless and immeasurable treasures (*milia innumerabilium et inensorum thesaurorum*) are concealed. Apart from these twelve Aeons, the *Letter* specifies that God possesses in union with Himself ‘blessed and illustrious aeons’ (*beata et gloriosa saecula*) whose number (*numerus*) and extent (*prolixitas*) cannot be estimated. God’s splendid kingdoms (*splendidissima regna*) are founded upon the bright and blessed earth (*supra lucidam et beatam terram*), while near one section of that glorious and holy land (*inlustris illius ac sanctae terrae*) is the Land of Darkness, deep and of immeasurable extent (*profunda et inmensa magnitudine*). The infinity and greatness of this Land of Darkness (*infinitae tenebrae; inaeestimabiles*) is further accentuated in the *Letter*’s fragments we have and also evident from the fact that it has an enormous Ruler and Leader (*inmanis princeps ... et dux*), ‘who has congregated around himself innumerable rulers’ (*habens circa se innumerabiles principes*). Finally, it is stated about the Land of Darkness: ‘These were the Five Natures of the pestiferous Land’ (*haeque fuerunt naturae quinque terrae pestiferae*).

If only *one* writing should be mentioned that played a role in Augustine’s first encounter with the Manichaeans, Mani’s *Fundamental Letter* seems to be the best candidate. However, *many* books played a part in his first introduction to the Manichaeans; while it may also be recalled that Augustine later proudly states that he is able to quote ‘innumerable passages from the books (*libri*) of Mani’⁴⁴ and that in all his letters the exordium reads: ‘Mani, apostle of Jesus Christ ...’⁴⁵ The *Fundamental Letter* in any case dealt extensively with God’s *splendidissima regna supra lucidam et beatam terram*, which Augustine in *conf.* 3,10 characterizes as *phantasmata splendida* meant to represent God. Mani’s *Letter* also stresses the infiniteness of God’s realm of twelve Aeons (e.g. *milia innumerabilium et inensorum thesaurorum*), which matches

42 According to the Manichaean *doctor* Felix in Augustine, c. *Fel.* 2,1 (*CSEL* 25,828).

43 Latest full discussion by Markus Stein, *Manichaica Latina*, Band 2: *Manichaei epistula fundamenti. Text, Übersetzung, Erläuterungen* (Papyrologica Coloniensia XXVII/2), Paderborn etc.: Ferdinand Schöningh 2002.

44 *C. Sec.* 3 (*CSEL* 25, 909).

45 *C. Faust.* 13,4 (*CSEL* 25, 381,2–5): ‘... apostolum quippe eius se dicit (...) omnes tamen eius epistulae ita exordiantur: Manichaeus apostolus Iesu Christi’. I see no reason to dismiss such a comment as mere rhetorical exaggeration.

Augustine's remark that the *phantasmata splendida* represent vast and unlimited (*grandiora et infinita*) entities. Also, Mani's statement that the Land of Darkness consists of 'Five Natures' finely corresponds with Augustine's testimony about 'the Five Elements variously coloured on account of the Five Caves of Darkness'.⁴⁶

The fact that the passages we have of Mani's *Letter* do not mention the sun and moon and their function does not seem problematic in our context. A doctrinal *Letter* explaining 'the beginning, the middle and the end', in other words the Manichaean cosmogonic, cosmological and anthropogonic myth, will surely have dealt with the sun and moon, most likely in a protological or eschatological context. It may also be reminded that Mani's statements in this regard later provided the first cause for Augustine's doubt: he compared his knowledge gained 'in the books of secular wisdom' 'with the sayings of *Mani* who wrote copiously and foolishly on these matters', sc. the eclipses of sun and moon,⁴⁷ and he then also stresses that 'their (i.e., the Manichaeans') books are full of immensely lengthy fables about the heaven and stars and sun and moon'.⁴⁸ If not already in Mani's *Letter*, then certainly in other books by Mani (such as, as we have seen, in the *Thesaurus*) or in other writings of the Manichaeans, the creation of the sun and moon and their function in the redemption process were extensively discussed.⁴⁹

How can all this be related to Mani's *Picture Book*? Extensive research has recently demonstrated, among other things, that the *Ārdahang* (of which several copies were in circulation, each of which was probably entrusted to one of the most senior members of the Manichaean Church)⁵⁰ had a large size,⁵¹ was used in the course of oral instruction,⁵² and comprised a series of didactic paintings displayed in front of the listeners.⁵³ The themes of these instructive

46 Cf. above n. 27 for *naturae* = *elementa*.

47 *Conf.* 5,6 (*CCL* 27,59–60): '... et conferebam cum dictis Manichaei, quae de his rebus multa scripsit copiosissime delirans, et non mihi occurrebat ratio nec solistitorum et aequinoctiorum nec defectuum luminarium nec quidquid tale in libris saecularis sapientiae didiceram'.

48 *Conf.* 5,12 (*CCL* 27,63): 'Libri quippe eorum pleni sunt longissimis fabulis de caelo et sideribus et sole et luna'.

49 For accounts of the creation of sun and moon as ships of light, see—apart from Mani's *Thesaurus* book 7—e.g. the Manichaean *Kephalaia* (ed. Polotsky, 15,8–10; etc.), *Psalm-Book* (ed. Allberry, 42,18; etc.) and *Cologne Mani Codex* 34 (ed. Henrichs & Koenen, 21).

50 E.g. Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, 107: '... it is possible that later all 12 Teachers (besides the head of the Manichaean Church) had copies of it'.

51 Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, e.g. 96.

52 Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, e.g. 19; 31; 32; 46; etc.

53 Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, e.g. 86 and 96.

paintings included the 'Pre-creation Myth on Dualism' (the 'Combat of Light and Darkness'); 'Eschatology' (Jesus's Second Coming and the World Fire); 'Salvation' (the 'Soul Departing the Body').⁵⁴ This overview is especially based on the fragments of the so-called *Ārdahang Wifrās*, i.e. 'a set of teachers' notes that contain references to similes and parables that could be brought up as needed during an oral sermon (*Wifrās*) given on the images of Mani's *Book of Pictures* (*Ārdhang*).⁵⁵ One can perhaps supplement this very partial reconstruction with data Augustine appears to report in *conf.* 3,10–11: images of the visible sun and moon, either representing their creation or their current and/or eschatological function as 'the ships of light'; images of the Kingdom of Light, i.e. of God's vast and limitless aeons which are consubstantial with God; images of (the eschatological destiny in) the vast and limitless Kingdom of Darkness.

4 The Problem of *Against Faustus* 20,9

I am aware of the tentative character of the reconstruction just given, but in the difficult and exciting search for the contents of Mani's *Picture Book* I offer it as a plausible addition gleaned from Augustine's works. Others are welcome to supplement, correct or even refute my notes, either from Augustine's oeuvre or other sources. Anyway, it seems likely to me that—as was the case elsewhere—Mani's teachings were also illustrated in the Latin West with images from his *Picture*. Various Coptic sources explicitly report its existence⁵⁶ and in all likelihood Mani's teaching was spread from Egypt to Roman Africa. Besides, I call to mind that Mani's religion was a static book religion in which a set of authoritative books by the founder (incl. his *Picture*)⁵⁷ was always and everywhere foundational and central.

54 Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, 96. Later (e.g. 105) she also encloses as themes 'Prophets' (e.g. Jesus' life) and 'Polemics' (false belief and idol worship).

55 Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, 9.

56 Cf. Manichaean *Homilies* 18,5; 25,5; 27,20; 28,16 (ed. Polotsky; ed. Pedersen); *Kephalaia* (ed. Böhlig) 234,26; 234–236 (= *Keph.* 92 entitled: 'The Apostle is asked: Why when you drew every thing in the Picture, did you not draw the Purification of the Catechumens who shall be cleansed by Transmigration?'); 371,28 (ed. Funk).

57 Cf. e.g. A. Böhlig, *Der Manichäismus*, Zürich & München: Artemis Verlag 1980, 47 with correct reference to G. Haloun & W.B. Henning, 'The Compendium of the Doctrines and Styles of the Teaching of Mani, the Buddha of Light' *Asia Minor* 1952, Appendix 11 ('The Manichaean Canon'), 209 f. I choose this reference, because Böhlig also remarks on the following page: 'Die Bezeichnung des Bildbandes im chinesischen Katechismus als «(Schrift) der Grundlage» erinnert an den «Brief der Grundlage» (Epistula fundamenti), zu dem Augustin bekanntlich eine Gegenschift verfaßt hat. Es erhebt sich die Frage, ob die Epis-

However, two esteemed colleagues, i.e. Jason BeDuhn⁵⁸ and in particular Zsuzsanna Gulácsi,⁵⁹ have emphatically stated that Augustine did not become acquainted with any Manichaean image and thus knew nothing about Mani's *Picture Book*. Their pivotal reference is to Augustine's *c. Faust.* 20,9. There it runs:

Nam et corporalium uitiorum simulacra Romani consecrauerunt, sicut Palloris et Febris. ut ergo omittam, quod simulacrorum adoratores circa ipsas corporum figuras habent adfectum (...) tamquam deos timeant (...) uerumtamen et ista, quoquo modo sunt (...) et, quae ex his interpretantur, in rebus inueniuntur. uos autem primum hominem cum quinque elementis belligerantem; et spiritum potentem de captiuis corporibus gentis tenebrarum an potius de membris dei uestri uictis atque subiectis mundum fabricantem: et splendentem reliquias eorundem membrorum dei uestri habentem in manu et cetera omnia capta, obpressa, inquinata plangentem; et Atlantem maximum subter humeris suis cum eo ferentem, ne totum ille fatigatus abiciat, atque ita fabula uestra uelut in tapete theatro ad illius ultimi globi catastolium peruenire non possit, et alia innumerabilia pariter inepta et insana nec pingendo aut sculpendo nec interpretando demonstratis. et ea,⁶⁰ cum omnino nulla sint, creditis et colitis et insuper christianis fide non ficta pias mentes mundantibus tamquam temere credulis insultatis. ut enim multa non quaeram, quibus haec ostendantur omnino non esse, quia subtilius sublimiusque tractare de mundi fabrica, etsi mihi difficile non esset, certe nimis longum est, hoc dico: si ista uera sunt, dei substantia commutabilis est, corruptibilis, coinquinabilis. hoc autem credere plenum est sacrilegae insaniae. illa

tula fundamenti vielleicht mit dem Kommentar zum Bildband identisch ist'. In my view, this tentative comment still deserves further reflection.

58 J.D. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, 1, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2010, 82: 'Augustine says explicitly that the Manichaeans he knew did not depict the elaborate pantheon of divine agents in art, nor offer any explanation of them (*Faust.* 20,9)'. The corresponding footnote refers to *c. Faust.* 20,10, which seems to have been (partly) followed by Gulácsi (see below, n. 59 *in fine*), although *c. Faust.* 20,10 does not provide anything on the issue.

59 Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, e.g. 3: 'Augustine even noted the aniconic nature of the religion in the form known to him'; 52: 'In his extensive writings about the Manichaeans, Augustine does not note any didactic paintings, portraits of Mani, or illuminated manuscripts. Pictorial art was not part of Augustine's Manichaean experience'; 150: '... Augustine in fourth-century North Africa, who actually states that he did not know about the existence of any artistic depictions of Manichaean teachings (*Contra Faustum* 20:9–10)'.

60 Corr. of Zycha's reading: '... demonstratis et ea. cum omnino ...'

igitur omnia uana sunt, falsa sunt, nulla sunt. proinde uos paganis istis, qui uulgo noti sunt et antiquitus fuerunt et in reliquiis suis iam nunc erubescunt, prorsus deteriores estis, quod illi colunt ea, quae dii non sunt, uos autem, omnino quae non sunt.

CSEL 25, 545–546 (ed. J. Zycha)⁶¹

The Romans have consecrated images (*simulacra*) even of bodily defects, such as Pallor and Fever. Let me then omit that the worshippers of these images (*simulacrorum adoratores*) have a disposition to those bodily forms (*corporum figuras*) (...) so that they reverence them as gods (*tamquam deos*) ... These [idols] nonetheless exist (*sunt*) in some way and the interpretations drawn from them are based on real things (*in rebus inueniuntur*). But yours is the First Man who wages war with the Five Elements; and the Powerful Spirit who fabricates the world from the captured bodies of the race of darkness, or rather from the members of your God which have been conquered and subjected; and the Splenditenens who holds in his hand the remnants of these members of your God and mourns all the other [members] that have been captured, suppressed, and polluted; and the very great Atlas who keeps him up with his shoulders, lest he [sc. the Splenditenens] should from weariness throw away his whole burden, so that your fable (*fabula*) cannot come, as if it were to a curtain in a theatre, to the covering veil of that final mass (*globus*)—these and countless other equally silly and crazy things you do not demonstrate (*demonstratis*) in paintings or sculptures (*nec pingendo aut sculpendo*) or in any higher meaning (*nec interpretando*).⁶² Although they do not exist at all (*cum omnino nulla sint*), you believe in them and worship them and, moreover, you insult Christians who purify their pious minds by an unfeigned faith as being thoughtlessly credulous. In order that I will not look for many proofs to show that these things do not exist at all (*omnino non esse*)—although I could without difficulty discourse in a quite subtle and lofty manner on the architecture of the world, it would certainly take too long—I only say this: if these things are true (*si ista uera sunt*), God's substance is mutable, corruptible, capable of contamination. But I believe this is full of sacrilegious insanity. All those things, therefore, are vain (*uana*), and false (*falsa*), and non-existent (*nulla*). Thus, you are much worse than those pagans who are well known and date from antiquity and

61 *Sancti Avrelii Augustini De utilitate credendi ... contra Faustum*, recensuit Iosephus Zycha, Pragae-Vindobonae-Lipsiae: F. Tempsky-F. Tempsky-G. Freytag MDCCCLXXXI.

62 As do the pagans in their allegorical interpretations.

who—the few of them that are left—are now ashamed. For *they* worship things that are not gods, but *you* worship things that do not exist at all (*omnino quae non sunt*).

I see no reason to claim on the basis of this text that Augustine 'noted the aniconic nature' of the Manichaeism he had become acquainted with. On the contrary, on the basis of this passage I would rather argue the opposite. Augustine notes that the (Roman) pagans have images 'even of bodily defects' which they revere as gods; these idols, so he adds, 'exist in some way and the interpretations drawn from them are based on real things'. But the things (or entities) in which the Manichaeans believe and which they worship 'do not exist at all: *omnino non esse*'. This is repeated again at the end of the passage ('*nulla ... omnino quae sunt*'), which emphasis on their non-existence even brings to mind *conf.* 3,10: the Manichaeans worship *phantasmata*.

But does Augustine claim in *c. Faust.* 20,9 that the Manichaeans have no image whatsoever of the content of their myth and, in particular, of their mythological figures? In my opinion, he emphasizes here—as a real insider—that *certain* (and even important) elements and personifications are missing in their images: no pictorial representation of the First Man who wages war, nor of the Powerful Spirit who fabricates the world, or of the Splenditenens who holds in his hand the remnants of 'these members of your God', or of Atlas who helps this Splenditenens to bear his 'godly' burden. All these elements are pre-eminently objectionable and therefore—according to Augustine in our passage—not represented in any image. Besides, also Gulácsi reports that even Manichaean figures such as the Light Maiden and the Third Messenger in all probability were not depicted in the *Ārdahang*.⁶³ Elsewhere in *contra Faustum*, Augustine sarcastically evokes the Manichaeans: 'Show your Splenditenens and your Atlas'.⁶⁴ The last mentioned figure was very well known and very often represented in antique sculptures and other representations, but in his Manichaean garb—because of his just indicated link with the Splenditenens—offensive to the general public and apparently therefore not displayed in any Manichaean image.

63 Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, 82: '... we cannot assume that all figures mentioned in these analogies in the *Ārdhang Wifrās* (Ohya, Leviathan, and Raphael; lion-cubs, calves, and foxes; or even Manichaean figures such as the Light Maiden and the Third Messenger) were necessarily depicted within the corresponding image of the *Ārdhang* ...'.

64 *C. Faust.* 15,5 (*CSEL* 25,424): 'ostende nobis moechos tuos, splenditenentem ponderatorem et Atlantem laturarium'.

5 Final Remarks

Future analyses of, among others, *c. Faustum* 15,6 and 13,18 (*Incendite omnes illas membranas elegantesque tecturas decoris pellibus exquisitas ... etc.*) might be able to confirm the accuracy of my investigation. One may also wonder to what extent Augustine early tractate *De pulchro et apto*—allegedly ‘lost’, but wholly Manichaean and therefore no longer accepted by Augustine and, moreover, prohibited by the Theodosian and other Christian laws!—was induced by Manichaean pictures in general and even Mani’s *Picture Book* in particular.⁶⁵ All this should be left to future studies.

I finally remark that a curious passage in the *Liber pontificalis*, the oldest parts of which according to scholarly opinion have been compiled in the fifth or sixth century, seems to confirm that Manichaean images (perhaps even including Mani’s *Picture Book*) were known in the Latin West: ‘After all this the blessed Symmachus [*sed.* 498–514] found Manichaeans in the city of Rome, burned with fire all their *images* and books before the doors of the basilica of Constantine, and condemned them to exile.’⁶⁶

65 Cf. e.g. *conf.* 4,24 (CCL 27,52): ‘Et conuerti me ad animi naturam, et non me sinebat falsa opino, quam de spiritalibus habebam, uerum cernere. Et inruebat in oculos ipsa uis ueri et auertebam palpitantem mentem ab incorporea re ad liniamenta et colores et tumentes magnitudines ...’. Cf. ch. 5.

66 *Lib. pont.* 53; cf. e.g. Louis Duchesne, *Le Liber pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire*, 1, Paris: É. Thorin 1886, 261.

Monnica's Bishop and the '*filius istarum lacrimarum*' (conf. 3,21)

1 Introduction

*Apart from some striking elements in his conversion story, nothing seems more well known about young Augustine's life than his being 'the son of tears'.

The characterization appears at the end of Book 3 of his *Confessions*. Book 3 begins with a description of Augustine's student days in Carthage and—apart from a moving record of his coming across Cicero's *Hortensius*—largely deals with his conversion to the Manichaeans. Book 4 is about his stay among the followers of Mani and how this found its expression in his first writing *De pulchro et apto*.¹ As some sort of pivot between these two books, one finds the episode featuring the words: '*a son of such tears cannot be lost*'.

The fact that the exact text explicitly reads '*such tears: istae lacrimae*' has often been lost in popular renderings. In Protestant circles '*istae*' has sometimes been preserved, but the '*lacrimae*' often disappeared: it is usually stated that mother Monnica hears that 'the son of such (or: so many) *prayers* cannot be lost'. After all, how according to Protestant principles can tears contribute to salvation?

The episode also tells of an African bishop who has said all these specific words. It is only rarely realized that this ecclesiastic is reported to be a former Manichaean, who was given as some sort of *oblatus* to the Manichaeans and had 'not only read, but even transcribed almost all their books'.

Without a doubt, the passage contains several curious elements that call for a closer look. Before starting our analysis, however, it seems useful to reproduce the entire passage, followed by a translation which is as literal as possible:

Et dedisti alterum responsum interim, quod recolo. Nam et multa praetereo, propter quod propero ad ea quae me magis arguent confiteri tibi, et multa non memini. Dedisti ergo alterum per sacerdotem tuum, quendam

* First publication in *Church History and Religious Culture* 103 (2023) 1-21, slightly adapted.

1 On the Manichaean-based character of this work, see ch. 5.

episcopum nutritum in ecclesia et exercitatum in libris tuis. Quem cum illa femina rogasset, ut dignaretur mecum conloqui, et refellere errores meos et dedocere me mala ac docere bona—faciebat enim hoc, quos forte idoneos inuenisset—noluit ille, prudenter sane, quantum sensi postea. Respondit enim me adhuc esse indocilem, et quod inflatus essem nouitate haeresis illius et nonnullis quaestiunculis iam multos inperitos exagitassem, sicut illa indicauerat ei. “Sed” inquit “sine illum ibi. Tantum roga pro eo dominum: ipse legendo reperiet, quis ille sit error et quanta impietas.” Simul etiam narrauit se quoque paruulum a seducta matre sua datum fuisse manichaeis et omnes paene non legisse tantum verum etiam scriptitasse libros eorum sibi que adparuisse nullo contra disputante et conuincente, quam esset illa secta fugienda: itaque fugisse. Quae cum ille dixisset atque illa nollet adquiescere, sed instaret magis deprecando et ubertim flendo, ut me uideret et mecum dissereret, ille iam sub-stomachans taedio: “Vade” inquit “a me; ita uiuas, fieri non potest, ut filius istarum lacrimarum pereat.” Quod illa ita se accepisse inter conloquia sua mecum saepe recordabatur, ac si de caelo sonuisset.

CCL 27,38–39

And meanwhile You gave another answer, which I recall. For much I pass over, because I am hurrying to those things which especially urge me to confess You; and much I do not remember. You gave another answer through a priest of yours, a bishop nurtured in the Church and well versed in Your books. When that woman asked him to deign to converse with me and refute my errors and correct my evil doctrines and teach me good ones (for he was used to doing this, whenever he happened to find anyone fitted to receive it), he declined, wisely indeed, as I later perceived. For he answered that I was still unteachable, because I was inflated with the novelty of that heresy, and because—as she had informed him—I had already disturbed many inexperienced persons with many trivial questions. “But leave him where he is,” he said, “only pray the Lord for him; he will of himself, by reading, discover what that error is, and what a gross impiety.” At the same time he told how he himself, when a little one, had been given over to the Manichaeans by his misguided mother, and had not only read, but even copied almost all their books, and had come to see (without argument or proof from anyone) how much that sect was to be avoided, and therefore he had left it. When he had said this to her and she was still unwilling to agree but pressed him with more begging and copiously shedding tears, asking him to see me and debating with me, he became at last irritated and bored: “Go away from me,” he said, “as you

live, it is not possible that the son of these tears be lost!" In her conversations with me she often recalled that she had received this answer, as if it had sounded from heaven.

2 Where and Whence?

A few general remarks may precede the special analyses. First of all, where does this episode occur? Augustine does not say it explicitly and the recollections in his *Confessions* do not always adhere to historical order.² Some indications seem to point to his birthplace. That is apparently the place of Monnica's dream which immediately precedes our episode and is directly connected to it. After her dream 'she allowed me to live with her and to have me at the same table in the house'.³ I cannot read the narrative of *conf.* 3,19–21 otherwise than that all happened at Thagaste, the place where 'she had begun refusing me, in her aversion from and detestation of the blasphemies of my error'.⁴ We know from elsewhere that—probably due to the refusal of his mother—Augustine lived in this town for a while with his benefactor Romanianus.⁵ He persuaded him to Manichaeism, likely beginning at this time, and hence a zealous young Manichaean could find reception with another young Manichaean. In all probability this took place in or about AD 375, i.e. during the time Augustine taught as a grammarian in Thagaste. By then he was not alone: since 372 he had his concubine and in the course of 373 he had fathered a son. We must conclude that Monnica not only banned her own son from her house, but also his wife and her grandchild. All this makes her frequent and copious tears (see below) even more understandable.

2 An example immediately clear to any reader is the transition between *conf.* 4,27 and 4,28: *De pulchro et apto* was written when he was 25 to 26 years old, after that it is recorded that he was almost 20 years when he read and understood Aristotle's *Categories*.

3 *Conf.* 3,19 (*CCL* 27,37): 'Nam unde illud somnium, quo eam consolatus es, ut uiuere mecum cederet et habere mecum eandem mensam in domo?' J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine, Confessions*, 2, *Commentary on Books 1–7*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992, 198–199, gives a rather forced interpretation of this text and claims that Monnica came to Carthage after Patricius' death and was subsequently evicted from the house by her son. So, a fairly wealthy widow in a poor student's house? And where in Carthage did Monnica stay afterwards? And, more importantly, how can this be harmonized with e.g. *conf.* 9,30 (*CCL* 27,130): '... appellabat me pium et commemorabat grandi dilectionis affectu numquam se audisse ex ore meo iaculatum in se durum aut contumeliosum sonum'. I follow the 'traditional' explanation, which in my view is very well compatible with the '*mecum*' of the text (the Maurists read '*secum*' after '*habere*').

4 *Conf.* 3,19 (*CCL* 27,37): 'Quod nolle coeperat auersans et detestans blasphemias erroris mei'.

5 *C. Acad.* 2,3.

3 Monnica's Bishop

'Meanwhile You gave another answer, which I recall'. *'Recolo'* in the opening sentence of *conf.* 3,21 could also be rendered as 'to reflect upon', or even most literally as 'to cultivate again'. It concerns an *'alterum responsum'* to Monnica: the first one was by her dream when she saw herself standing on a *regula* with, on closer inspection, her son with her. Like the first answer in *conf.* 3,19–20, the second one is drawn out quite broadly, 'cultivated' so to speak to indicate the deeper meaning.

The second answer to Monnica does not come directly from above, not like the first one from 'a bright youth who smiled happily at her' in a dream or vision (*somnium, uisum*). This answer is heard in the middle of every day's reality and, moreover, it comes from a rather abrupt and presumably old bishop. Who was this bishop and how should we understand his curious answer?

3.1 *The Bishop's Identity*

In the past there has been some speculation about the identity of this '*sacerdos*'. It has been suggested it was a certain Antigonus, bishop of Madauros during the Carthaginian council of 349.⁶ However, this is pure speculation which, moreover, seems to conflict with sound facts.⁷ Pierre Courcelle speaks of 'un évêque catholique de passage'.⁸ At first glance, this seems possible given Augustine's comment that this bishop 'was used to doing this [i.e., according to his episcopal duty, refute errors and correct evil doctrines and teach good ones], whenever he *happened* to find anyone fitted to receive it'. This may induce the idea of a visiting prelate. But such an interpretation is by no means necessary and it seems quite possible that the parenthesis '*faciebat enim hoc, quos forte idoneos inuenisset*' (which refers to the bishop and not to Monnica, as has sometimes been thought)⁹ is an appropriate qualification also befitting a local bishop, most likely that of Thagaste. After all, it is most probably a local pastor since he knows much about Augustine, from his own experience and from what Monnica has told him: 'For he answered that I was still unteachable, because I was inflated with the novelty of that heresy, and because, as she had

6 See further e.g. O'Donnell, *Commentary*, 2, 201.

7 Cf. e.g. 'Antigonus', *PAC*, 72: Antigonus is mentioned here as '*episcopus Maginensis*' (or *Matirensis, Mazirensis*) and the year of the council is 345/348. Perhaps (cf. *ibidem*, n. 2) the Madauros suggestion is based on the index of C. Munier, *Concilia Africae* (CCL 149,377).

8 P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, Paris: É de Boccard 1950 (1968²), 68.

9 E.g. *Œuvres de saint Augustin*, 13, *Les Confessions*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1963 (repr. with 'Addenda et corrigenda' 1998), 403.

informed him, I had already disturbed many inexperienced persons with many trivial questions'. If it is indeed the local Catholic bishop of Thagaste, then some names could come into play, and based on *conf.* 3,21 we could add some interesting data to one of those names. But, unfortunately, not a single name of a bishop of Thagaste from these years is known so far.¹⁰

A plea for a local bishop of Thagaste may be strengthened by two considerations. First, it should be noticed that Augustine nowhere in his *Confessions* or elsewhere mentions a former local bishop, not even the bishop who was there when, at the time he was an infant, 'the name of Christ was placed upon' him,¹¹ or the person who was in office when his father was baptized ca. 370/371.¹² Secondly, one can well imagine that the bishop of his birthplace kept a considerable distance from the Manichaean Augustine, who proselytized there and persuaded local persons (Romanianus; the unnamed friend who died early)¹³ to his Manichaean beliefs. All this created a certain distance, as later sometimes appeared in the attitude of Ambrose.¹⁴

It is, of course, certain that the unnamed bishop was not Ambrose, as the pious folk tales sometimes suggest.¹⁵ This unknown bishop tells about himself unheard things, which cannot be connected with Ambrose in any way. First: 'he himself, when a *paruulus*, had been given over to the Manichaeans by his misguided mother'. In addition: 'he had not only read, but even copied almost all their books'. And also: 'he had come to see (without argument or proof from anyone) how much that sect was to be avoided, and therefore he had left it'. All of these features require further attention.

3.2 '... paruulum a seducta matre sua datum fuisse manichaeis ...'

The first interesting aspect is that the bishop had been brought to the Manichaeans by his mother as a *paruulus*. '*Paruulus*' indicates that this happened

10 Cf. e.g. S.-M. Pellistrandi, 'Fastes de l'Église d'Afrique', *PAC*, 1241–1309 (esp. 1289); N. Benseddik, 'À la recherche de Thagaste, patrie de saint Augustin', in P.-Y. Fux, J.-M. Roesli, O. Wermelinger (éds.), *Augustinus Afer: Saint Augustin: africanité et universalité. Actes du colloque international Alger-Annaba, 1–7 avril 2000*, Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires 2003, 2, 413–436; *eadem*, *Thagaste Souk Ahras (Algérie). Patrie de saint Augustin*, Alger: Inas Éditions 2005.

11 *Conf.* 6,5 (*CCL* 27,77): '... ecclesia unica (...) in qua mihi nomen Christi infanti est inditum ...'.

12 For these years, see e.g. J.J. O'Donnell, 'Patricius', *AL* 4, Basel 2012–2018, 530–532 (531).

13 *Conf.* 4,7–12 (*CCL* 27,43–46).

14 E.g. *conf.* 6,18 (*CCL* 27,86): 'Non uacat Ambrosio ...'. Cf. e.g. J.A. Davids, 'Sint Augustinus en Sint Ambrosius', *Miscellanea Augustiniana*, Rotterdam: W.L. & J. Brusse 1930, 242–255.

15 But even now and then it is also assumed in scholarly books, such as by M.R. Miles, *Desire and Delight. A New Reading of Augustine's Confessions*, New York: Crossroad 1992, 82.

when he was a little boy. Quite unexpectedly, *conf.* 3,21 provides insight into a going-on among the Manichaeans in Roman North Africa. It is well known that rigid (especially sexual) asceticism was their directive, most strictly for the Elect. Consequently, the cells of these Elect would die out after a period of time unless new input came from outside. One possibility for this was child oblation.

According to fairly concordant traditions, this practice is first and foremost known with regard to Mani himself. The tenth-century Muslim encyclopaedist, Ibn al-Nadīm, reports in his *Fihrist* that the young Mani was handed over to a group of baptists (*al-Mughtasila*: 'those who wash themselves') in Southern Babylonia. This was done not only by his father Fattiq, but also by his mother Mays or Mar Maryam. In the most recent translation of the Arabic text,¹⁶ the passage in question reads as follows:

They [i.e. the Mughtasila] were the sect which Fattiq was ordered to join while his wife was pregnant with Mānī. When she gave birth to him, they claim that she experienced favorable dreams about him and that when she awoke, she watched while a certain entity took him and ascended with him into the air. Then he returned him, but possibly he remained (in the heavens) for one or two days before he reappeared. Then his father sent for and brought him to the place in which he was dwelling, and he grew up with him and was instructed in accordance with his religion. Even when young, Mānī would speak words of wisdom.¹⁷

This is not the place to go into some intriguing details of the account, nor into the interesting question of whether we can speak of a Jewish custom. Anyway, we may take it for sure that the Mughtasila were *Jewish* Baptists (it is almost generally accepted that they were Elkesaites);¹⁸ furthermore, Josephus reports of the Jewish Essenes that adoption of other people's children occurred.¹⁹ Apparently Mani's oblation is part of such a tradition.

16 G. Flügel, *Mani: seine Lehre und seine Schriften*, Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus 1862 (repr. Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag 1969), 49 ff.

17 J.C. Reeves, *Prolegomena to a History of Islamicate Manichaeism*, Sheffield (UK)-Bristol (CT, USA): Equinox 2013, 37. Cf. e.g. B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm. A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, 2, New York-London: Columbia University Press 1970, 774.

18 See e.g. L. Cirillo, 'Elchasaiti e Battisti de Mani: i limiti di un confronto delle fonti', in L. Cirillo & A. Roselli (eds.), *Codex Manichaicus Coloniensis*, Cozenza: Marra Editore 1986, 97–139.

19 Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum* 2,8,2 (120); see e.g. H.St.J. Thackeray, *Josephus, The Jewish War, Books I–III*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1967, 368.

Conf. 3,21 shows that Manichaean child oblation also took place in Roman Africa. Moreover, according to another testimony of Augustine, it seems to have happened among the followers of Mani in Italy.²⁰ From the Coptic Manichaean *Kephalaia* we learn that according to Mani himself 'one of the great works' or 'alms' of the Manichaean 'catechumen' (i.e., the Manichaean *auditor*) may consist of this very same child donation:

The second work of the catechumenate that he does is this: A person will give a child to the church for the (sake of) righteousness, or his relative or member of the household; or he can rescue someone beset by trouble; or buy a slave and give him for righteousness. Accordingly, every good he might do, namely this one whom he gave as a gift for righteousness; that catechumen [...] will share in with them.²¹

But the best example²² remains Mani himself. The specific testimony of Ibn al-Nadim has been confirmed rather recently by the *Cologne Mani Codex*. Here it reads, among other things:

... of my body until the fourth year. *Then* I entered the religion (*dogma*) of the Baptists in which I was also brought up when my body was young, protected through the might of the angels of light and of the powers of great strength who had a command from Jesus concerning my²³ protection.²⁴

Were Manichaeans in the Latin world even familiar with this tradition about Mani himself and did they follow it (partly) for that reason? It might be possible. Although Augustine reveals remarkably little about Mani's life,²⁵ and especially emphasizes that he was a *Persa* (i.e., belonged to the hereditary enemies of the Roman Empire),²⁶ this information about Mani (like the just

20 Cf. *mor.* 2,52 (CSEL 90,135).

21 *Kephalaia* 80, ed. H.J. Polotsky, A. Böhlig, *Kephalaia*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1940, 193,4–11; transl. I. Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher*, Leiden-Boston-Köln: E.J. Brill 1995, 202.

22 Below more on the most recent discoveries of Manichaean texts in Egyptian Kellis; *P.Kell. Copt.* 25 also seems to indicate the practice of child oblation in connection with a certain Piene.

23 I follow a new and now generally accepted reading: *emès* for *eilès*.

24 See e.g. L. Koenen & C. Römer, *Der Kölner Mani-Codex. Über das Werden seines Leibes. Kritische Edition*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag 1988, 6 and 8.

25 The same goes for Latin Manichaeans such as Faustus, Fortunatus, Felix and Secundinus.

26 Cf. *haer.* 46,1 (CCL 46,312): 'Manichaei a quodam *Persa* exstiterunt qui uocabatur Manis ...'. However, a little further in *haer.* 46,1 (CCL 312–313) he reveals that 'quidam eorum

quoted manna tradition not known from written sources) may well have become known in Roman Africa through oral transmission.

3.3 ‘... et omnes paene non legisse tantum uerum etiam scriptitasse libros eorum ...’

This part of the bishop’s saying is revealing indeed. Somewhere in Roman Africa (maybe in Thagaste, or Carthage, or elsewhere) a young Manichaean ‘not only read, but even copied almost all their books’. Augustine is not the only one about whom the *Confessiones* report an extensive familiarity with Manichaean literature: he has a notable predecessor in this African bishop.

‘*Omnes paene ... libros eorum*: nearly all their books’ implies a specific amount of Manichaean books translated into Latin.²⁷ In *conf.* 5,¹¹ Augustine hints at the existence of such translated books in what he reports about Faustus:

Et quia legerat ... (libros) ... suae sectae si qua uolumina latine atque compositae conscripta erant ...

CCL 27,62

And because he had read ... (books) ... of his sect if these volumes were written in Latin in an orderly way ...

For the rhetorically gifted Faustus, ‘proper Latin’ was a precondition; apparently there were Latin Manichaean works that did not meet this requirement. In the quoted phrase the word ‘*uolumina*’ may also be noticed: was Faustus (like Ambrose, for example)²⁸ a classic figure who still read *uolumina* and not *codices*? The report about Monnica’s bishop only suggests a certain amount of ‘*libri*’.

Which books could this relate to? The corpus of Latin Manichaean sources *certainly* known to us is still limited. Of Mani’s own writings these are the *Epistula fundamenti* and the *Thesaurus*, perhaps also the *Amatorium canticum* and

[sc. Manichaeorum] ... geminata N littera, Mannicheum uocant, quasi manna fundentem’. This curious manna tradition transmitted by Augustine (like he does already in *c. Faust.* 19,22) has only recently been confirmed by the discovery of the *Mani Codex*. Cf. *CMC* 107,18–19 (Koenen & Römer, *Mani-Codex*, 76).

27 I assume that the bishop had to limit himself to works translated into Latin. There is no indication that he (as e.g. Augustine’s episcopal predecessor Valerius) knew Greek, or any other ‘foreign’ language.

28 *Conf.* 6,3 (*CCL* 27,75): ‘... minus quam uellet uoluminum euolueret ...’.

possibly the *Epistula ad Menoch*. Latin writings of Manichaeans such as the *Capitula* of Faustus, the *Epistula* of Secundinus, and doctrinal statements such as those of Fortunatus and Felix in their disputations with Augustine are all of a later date. Maybe we can count the *Disputationes* of Adimantus among the quantum of Latin writings Monnica's bishop knew: Faustus (probably of the same age) reports in his *Capitula* that they are highly regarded by him as a source of inspiration.²⁹ Although Augustine in *retr.* 1,22 states that 'some disputations of Adimantus fell into my hands'³⁰ shortly after he had become a presbyter in Hippo, the expression '*uenerunt in manus meas*' may well be a literary topos. Catholic Christians in Hippo almost certainly knew about the collected work of Adimantus at an earlier stage,³¹ and this may also go for Monnica's bishop. Finally, I mention the *Codex Theuestinus*, a revealing specimen of Manichaean biblical exegesis (mainly of texts from the Gospels and Pauline letters) whose original composition may be dated to 'at least the second part of the fourth century'.³²

As far as we can see on the basis of the current data, the possible amount of Manichaean books Monnica's bishop has not only read but also transcribed seems to be limited: Mani's *Epistula fundamenti* and *Thesaurus*; a collection of *Disputationes* of Adimantus; perhaps one or more exegetical works such as the *Codex Theuestinus* or this codex itself. With regard to the *Amatorium*

29 C. Faust. 1,2 (CSEL 25,251–252): '... a doctissimo scilicet et solo nobis post beatum patrem nostrum Manichaeum studendo Adimanto ...'. What we know of these *Disputationes* (cf. e.g. the reconstructions and commentaries of N. Baker-Brian, *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire. A Study of Augustine's Contra Adimantum*, Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press 2009 and J.A. van den Berg, *Biblical Argument in Manichaean Missionary Practice. The Case of Adimantus and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2010) shows their being transmitted in strongly biblical inspired but acceptable Latin.

30 *Retr.* 1,22,1 (CCL 57,63): 'Eodem tempore uenerunt in manus meas quaedam disputationes Adimanti ...'.

31 Cf. e.g. van den Berg, *Biblical Argument*, 53.

32 M. Stein, *Manichaica Latina*, Band 3,1, *codex Thevestinus. Text, Übersetzung, Erläuterungen*, Paderborn etc.: Ferdinand Schöningh 2004, 140. The codex itself is dated by Stein, *ibidem*, 140 (cf. 117) to 'the fifth-sixth century'. As regards its language and style, it is interesting to note the opinion of J. BeDuhn & G. Harrison, 'The Tebessa Codex: A Manichaean Treatise on Biblical Exegesis and Church Order', in P. Mirecki & J. BeDuhn (eds.), *Emerging from Darkness. Studies in the Recovery of Manichaean Sources*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 1997, 38: 'The language and style of the TC offer no indications that the treatise has been translated from another language. Indeed, the author seems possessed of a plain, direct and clear, if not particularly distinctive, Latin style. (...) His phrases and clauses are neatly arranged and segmented. He is capable of complex hypotactic constructions'. In short, likely acceptable to persons such as Faustus and Monnica's bishop.

canticum it has been noted that it might be a translated part of Mani's Gospel,³³ or a Latin translation of one of Mani's canonical *Psalms*.³⁴ Reinhold Merkelbach assumed it was a song sung by the Elect during their daily eucharistic meal.³⁵

The above is based on what we know about the Manichaean sources presumably present in Latin at the time. Given the very probable familiarity of both Faustus and Augustine with Manichaean 'psalms' as they appear in the Coptic Manichaean *Psalmsbook*,³⁶ one could imagine such an acquaintance in the case of Monnica's bishop as well. With regard to Augustine, personal knowledge of Mani's *Picture Book* (Greek: *Eikôn*; Persian/Parthian variants: *Āržhang*, *Aržhang*, *Ārdahang*, *Ārdhang*) is also assumed,³⁷ and it seems likely that this missionary instrument was used earlier in the spread of Manichaeism in Roman Africa.

Monnica's bishop 'had not only read, but even copied almost all their books'. The activity of copying may point to a particular function within the class of the Elect,³⁸ but also occurred among the Auditors. A well-known miniature from Turfan shows the activity of the writers (in all probability Elect) in all its glory.³⁹ Recent discoveries of Manichaean texts in Egyptian Kellis report both male and female writers, all being Auditors;⁴⁰ in addition, at least one Piene seems to be an oblate being trained for ecclesiastical functions.⁴¹ It is important to note

33 A. Adam, *Texte zum Manichäismus*, Berlin 1969², 2.

34 Cf. e.g. I. Gardner & S.N.C. Lieu (eds.), *Manichaean Texts from the Roman Empire*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004, 164.

35 R. Merkelbach, *Mani und sein Religionssystem*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag 1986, 55–56.

36 For Augustine, see e.g. several passages in J. van Oort, *Mani and Augustine. Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2020 (repr. 2023) and below: ch. 7 on Augustine's conversion. For Faustus, see e.g. A. Villey, *Psaumes des errants. Écrits manichéens du Fayyûm*, Paris: Éditions du Cerf 1994, 393, recently endorsed by G. Wurst in *Contre Fauste le Manichéen. Contra Favstvm Manichaevm, Livres I–XII*, sous la direction de M. Dulaey, Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes 2018, 21.

37 See ch. 2.

38 Cf. e.g. M. Tardieu, *Le manichéisme*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1981, 78 for the classification in Eastern Manichaeism.

39 See e.g. Zs. Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art in Berlin Collections*, Turnhout: Brepols 2001, 92–94. The miniature illustrates the cover of K. Rudolph's widely read *Die Gnosis. Wesen und Geschichte einer spätantiken Religion*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2005⁴ (= *Gnosis: The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1983/1998).

40 Cf. e.g. I. Gardner, A. Alcock and W.-P. Funk, *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis*, 1, Oxford: Oxbow Books 1999, e.g. 77, 160, 223.

41 Gardner a.o., *Coptic Documentary Texts*, e.g. 76 and 170. See also M. Brand, *The Mani-*

that in Kellis the said writers' activity was not so much missionary, but above all for their private spiritual development.⁴² Moreover, it appears that they probably had access to canonical books of Mani.⁴³

The case of Monnica's bishop may be compared with those of the Kellites, among others, and in his person, we *certainly* have to do with a special identity marker: he was an oblate, i.e. a future Elect.⁴⁴ His ability to read and copy books indicates that he was among the Manichaeans until at least the advanced stages of his *pueritia*.⁴⁵

In conclusion, we may assume that the unknown Catholic bishop in his youth, by reading and copying, became well acquainted with quite a significant number of writings by Mani and his disciples and that, based on that knowledge (i.e. because he had seen the irrationality in the works well known to him), he specified his advice to Monnica.

3.4 '... sine illum ibi. (...) ipse legendo reperiet, quis ille sit error et quanta inpietas'

In this quote of the bishop's words, the emphasis for us is on '*legendo*'. As he himself, through reading and copying, had come to the insight 'how much that sect was to be avoided and therefore had left it', he now advises Monnica to leave her son among the Manichaeans until he himself '*legendo*' will have come to a better understanding. In his own case, '*legere*' referred to 'nearly all their books', but does this also apply to the young grammarian Augustine?

There are several reasons for an affirmative answer. In the case of *auditor* Augustine, too, there was an in-depth knowledge of the books of the Manichaeans.

First of all: he tells that, when he first met the followers of Mani (it was in Carthage), he was impressed by their many huge tomes.⁴⁶ There is reason to

chaeans of Kellis. Religion, Community, and Everyday Life, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2022, 73–75.

42 Brand, *The Manichaeans of Kellis*, 304.

43 Cf. e.g. Brand, *Manichaeans of Kellis*, 284.

44 Like e.g. the young Carthaginian *puella* Margarita about whom Augustine is speaking in *haer.* 46,9 (CCL 46,315). Cf. e.g. J. van Oort, 'Manichaean Women in Augustine's Life and Works' (2015), in *Mani and Augustine* (n. 36), 418–432 (428–430).

45 About the school system in Roman North Africa and, for example, about learning to read and write, see e.g. K. Vössing, *Schule und Bildung im Nordafrika der Römischen Kaiserzeit*, Bruxelles: Latomus. Revue d'Études Latines 1997, nearly *passim*. Cf. for Thagaste (Souk Ahras) his Index 'Orte in Afrika', 658 and for Carthage his special exposition 'Die Verbreitung von Alphabetisierung und literarischer Bildung', 541–557.

46 *Conf.* 3,10 (CCL 27,31): '... et libris multis et ingentibus'. Cf. e.g. J. van Oort, 'Augustine's Cri-

assume that he was shown large and even illustrated manuscripts (perhaps also Mani's *Icon*). He will have kept images of these in his memory and later he even manages to report what was apparently lacking among the images in the Manichaean manuscripts.⁴⁷

As for a precise '*legere*': from several testimonies in Augustine's works one gets the impression that already as a Hearer among the Manichaeans he had a remarkably extensive knowledge of Mani's writings and also of the literary expressions of his followers.⁴⁸ I here refer only to the fact that—after mentioning his disappointing meeting with Faustus, which was preceded by an intensive comparison of Mani's books and those of others⁴⁹—he notes at the beginning of *conf.* 5,13: 'So my study of Mani's writings was cut short'.⁵⁰

This study took place during Augustine's *auditor*-ship. It may be concluded that the advice of Monnica's bishop was followed, and the final result predicted by him, i.e. Augustine's abandonment of the *secta*, began to be realized from now onwards.

4 '*Vade (...) a me; ita uiuas, fieri non potest, ut filius istarum lacrimarum pereat*'

4.1 *The Bishop's Words, Their Background and Import*

Most intriguing in the whole story of *conf.* 3,21 is, in fact, the second series of words spoken by Monnica's bishop. As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, in this second quote the expression 'a son of *these/such* tears cannot be lost' has often been misunderstood: 'tears' were replaced by 'prayers' and the explicit designation '*istae*' was lost in translation or interpretation.

The real meaning, however, may become clear from the bishop's Manichaean background. This background is explicitly mentioned by Augustine.

ticism of Manichaeism: The Case of *Confessions* 3,10 and Its Implications' (1995), in *Mani and Augustine* (n. 36), 245–262.

47 See c. *Faust.* 20,9 (*CSEL* 25,424) and my discussion in ch. 2.

48 See e.g. *Mani and Augustine* (n. 36), 155–159; 196–199; 230–235. It is most curious that, until this very day, many translations of the *conf.* render '*Manichaei*' with 'of the Manichaean(s)' and not with 'of Mani'. Is the—maybe unconscious, but nevertheless real—reason that certain persons refuse to recognize that Augustine read and even ardently studied works by the 'arch heretic' Mani and thus could possibly have been influenced by him?

49 Cf. *conf.* 5,12 (*CCL* 27,63): '... conlatis numerorum rationibus, quas alibi ego legeram, utrum potius ita essent, ut Manichaei libri continebantur ...'.

50 *Conf.* 5,13 (*CCL* 27,63): 'Refracto itaque studio, quod intenderam in Manichaei litteras ...'.

Also, from his extensive knowledge of Manichaean terms and concepts he will—induced by his mother—have remembered the bishop's statement literally: 'in her [sc. Monnica's] conversations with me she often recalled that she had received *this* [answer], as if it had sounded from heaven'.

The last phrase '*ac si de caelo sonuisset*' seems to parallel the conversion scene at the end of Book 8.⁵¹ Indeed, the bishop's words could be taken as having the same value as the famous '*tolle lege*'. Whether or not Monnica's bishop has the same function as the '*puer an puella*' in *conf.* 8,29 will be discussed in a moment. In chapter seven I argue that, according to Manichaean understanding, the '*puer an puella*' represent the heavenly Jesus.⁵²

In *conf.* 3,21 it is Monnica who hears the quoted words as being a heavenly oracle. It is known from other occasions that she takes answers from an ecclesiastical authority (such as Ambrose in issues of African customs like meals at martyrs' graves and Saturday fasting) not only as commanding but even as divine oracles.⁵³

4.2 *Monnica's Tears and the Tears of the Manichaean Mother of Life*

Yet, without a doubt, Monnica is most remembered for her tears. These tears are mentioned over and over in the *Confessions*. It should be noted that, as a rule, her tears are spoken of in combination with her prayers. Thus, they are explicitly connected in e.g. *conf.* 5,15, but also in other instances they appear in close connection with prayers, or prayers are assumed to be present in the wider context.⁵⁴

This is not the place to give a more or less complete survey of Augustine's views on tears, weeping, grief and so on. Many relevant things have been written about this rather complicated subject, also with regard to the *Confessions*.⁵⁵ However, one essential aspect has so far escaped the attention of the researchers: why does Monnica's bishop specifically say '*istae lacrimae*'?

51 Cf. O'Donnell, *Commentary*, 2, 202.

52 See ch. 7, pp. 120–187.

53 For the first issue, see *conf.* 6,2 and *ep.* 36,14. As for Saturday fasting, Augustine himself later speaks of Ambrose's answer to Monnica as a heavenly oracle. See *ep.* 54,3: 'Ego uero de hac sententia etiam atque etiam cogitans, ita semper habui, *tanquam eam coelesti oraculo* acceperim'.

54 Apart from *conf.* 3,19–20 and 5,15, see e.g. 5,17 and 6,1. Cf. e.g. J. Balogh, 'Unbeachtetes in Augustins Konfessionen', *Didaskaleion* N.S. 4 (1926) 5–21, esp. 10–21.

55 See e.g. B. Müller, 'Lacrimae', *AL* 3, Basel: Schwabe 2004–2010, 895–896, with bibliography. One of the latest articles on the subject: M.R. Miles, 'St. Augustine's Tears. Recollecting and Reconsidering a Life', *AS* 51 (2020) 155–176.

Manichaean sources often speak of tears and weeping. One finds this, *inter alia*, in the Coptic Manichaean *Psalmbook*,⁵⁶ the *Kephalaia*,⁵⁷ and not least in the *Homilies*.⁵⁸

In his dissertation on ‘The Sermon on the Great War’ of the Coptic *Homilies* codex, Nils Arne Pedersen presented an overview of ‘lamentations’ and ‘weeping’ in Manichaean literature, followed by an attempt to understand this phenomenon.⁵⁹ According to the Manichaeans not only their own physical existence in this cosmos deserved lament, but they considered the entire universe full of weeping souls. They had ‘books of weeping’ and a writing by Mani himself is titled ‘The Weeping’.⁶⁰ The first text in the *Homilies* codex, ‘The Sermon on Prayer’, is also referred to as ‘*parime*, my weeping’ and ‘*pirime*, this weeping’.

Other parts of the *Homilies* codex also contain texts full of ‘weeping’ and ‘lament’, namely about Mani’s body as it is mourned during the Bêma Festival. Sorrow and joy go together on this feast: sorrow about Mani’s ‘crucifixion’ and one’s own sins; joy at the release of Mani’s ‘self’ and one’s own soul. The Sogdian confessional formula for the Elect, which seems to have been intended for the said Bêma Feast, includes an instruction ‘to weep, grieve and pray’.⁶¹ All this in order to do penance and receive Mani’s forgiveness.

Another Coptic text deserving special attention is *Kephalaion* 58: ‘The Four Powers that grieve (*lupeĩsthai*)’. As in the next *Kephalaion* 59, titled ‘The Chapter (*kephálaion*) of the Elements (*stoicheĩon*) that wept’, the shedding of tears

56 *A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, Part II, ed. & transl. C.R.C. Allberry, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1938, e.g. 44,27–29; 45,5; 62,25; 65,17; 70,28; 75,19; 84,28–29; 93,25; etc. See also ‘grief’ e.g. 21,6; 38,31; etc.

57 *Kephalaia*, ed. Polotsky & Böhlig (n. 21), e.g. 147–151; transl. Gardner, *Kephalaia* (n. 21), 154–158 (see also below).

58 H.J. Polotsky (ed., transl.), *Manichäische Homilien*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1934; N.A. Pedersen (ed., transl.), *Manichaean Homilies. With a Number of hitherto unpublished Fragments*, Turnhout: Brepols 2006.

59 N.A. Pedersen, *Studies in The Sermon on the Great War. Investigations of a Manichaean-Coptic text from the fourth century*, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press 1996, 200–222.

60 *Psalm-Book*, ed. Allberry, 47: *prime*. Cf. e.g. G. Wurst, (ed., transl.), *The Manichaean Coptic Papyri in the Chester Beatty Library: Psalm Book*, Part. II, Fasc. 1, *Die Bêma-Psalmen*, Turnhout: Brepols 1996, 47: ‘die Klage’.

61 Cf. W.B. Henning, *Ein manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch* (APAW.PH. 1936, Nr. 10), Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1937, repr. in *idem, Selected Papers*, 1, Téhéran-Liège: Bibliothèque Pahlavi & Leiden: Brill 1977, 417–557 (450): ‘seiner eignen Seele soll er sich erbarmen, und soll weinen und trauern, beten und flehen, und den Sündenerlaß erbitten’. See also the new edition by N. Sims-Williams, *A Manichaean Prayer and Confession Book*, Turnhout: Brepols 2022, 77.

in connection with the Manichaeian cosmological myth is described in detail. The beginning of *Kephalaion* 58 revealingly runs:

Once again, the enlightener (*pphōstér*, i.e., Mani) speaks to his disciples: I am one of they that grieve (*lupeĩsthai*) amongst these three powers which are heartbroken, who have come from the Father.

The first who grieves (*lupeĩsthai*) is the first Mother of Life. She is sad because of her sons who are set in affliction (*thlĩpsis*), for they were conjoined with the darkness and the poison. They have been bound with the entire ruling power (*archontiké*). For what was she grieving (*lupeĩsthai*), watching over them taking these afflictions (*thlĩpsis*)? Whenever she might see them and how suffering is brought upon them, she shall grieve (*lupeĩsthai*) and be unhappy on account of them.⁶²

The subject of this passage is the Mother of Life, a very central figure in Manichaeian myth and piety, also called the Great Spirit and the First Mother. In the most common version of the myth, she calls the First Man into existence. More than once she is also mentioned as the being who first extends her saving right hand to Primal Man.⁶³ This act is the archetypal basis of all redemption.

One should wonder to what extent Augustine knew all fine details of the Manichaeian myth. For example, in *c. Faust.*, written at about the same time as the *conf.*,⁶⁴ he displays a respectable knowledge of many details, as he did earlier in e.g. *mor.* 2. Since he indicates in *c. Faust.* that he knows exactly about the Manichaeian Primal or First Man,⁶⁵ he will almost certainly have known about the Mother of Life.

In the quote just given from *Kephalaion* 58, the Mother of Life is very characteristically described as *weeping* over her sons. The weeping Monnica will have recalled this weeping Mother of Life to Manichaeian readers of the *Confessions*. Even more: it seems quite clear that Augustine deliberately wanted to picture mother Monnica as an anti-type of the weeping Mother of Life.⁶⁶ The

62 *Kephalaia*, ed. Polotsky & Böhlig (n. 21), 147; transl. Gardner, *Kephalaia* (n. 21), 154–155, with minor emendation.

63 E.g. in *Kephalaion* 9 (ed. Polotsky), 38; transl. Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 43: 'The first right hand is the one that the Mother of Life gave to the First Man; when he comes out to the contest.'

64 Cf. e.g. M. Dulaey & A. Massie, 'Introduction' in *Contre Fauste le manichéen, Livres I–XII* (n. 36), 10.

65 Even from the start; see the detailed discussion in *c. Faust.* 2,3–5 (*CSEL* 25,256–258). Then also in e.g. *c. Faust.* 5,5 (*CSEL* 25,277); 20,11 (*CSEL* 25,551) and 24,2 (*CSEL* 25,724).

66 Cf. F. Feldmann, *Der Einfluss des Hortensius und des Manichäismus auf das Denken des jungen Augustinus von 373*, vol. 1–II, Dissertation Münster 1975 (typescript), I, 710.

introductory words to the section on Monnica's dream (*conf.* 3,19–20), which precedes our passage (*conf.* 3,21) and is closely associated with it,⁶⁷ may serve as a further substantiation of this view:

Et misisti manum tuam ex alto, et de hac profunda caligine eruisti animam meam, cum pro me fleret ad te mea mater, fidelis tua, amplius quam flent matres corporea funera. Videbat enim illa mortem meam ex fide et spiritu, quem habebat ex te, et exaudisti eam, domine, exaudisti eam nec despexisti lacrimas eius, cum profluentes rigarent terram sub oculis eius in omni loco orationis eius: exaudisti eam.

CCL 27,37

And You put forth Your Hand from on high, and from this deep darkness You delivered my soul because my mother, Your faithful servant, wept for me before You more than mothers weep over physical deaths. By the faith and spirit she had from You, she perceived the death which held me, and You heard her, Lord. You heard her and did not despise her tears which poured forth to wet the ground under her eyes in every place where she prayed. You did indeed hear her.

The weeping Monnica is depicted here as the instrument of God's saving Hand extended to Augustine, like in the Manichaean foundational myth the Mother of Life extends her saving Hand to Primal Man. Elsewhere I have argued that—both in Manichaean imagery *and* in Augustine's *Confessions*—God's saving Hand is a symbol of Christ.⁶⁸ This then may mean, by implication, that in the twofold story of *conf.* 3,19–21 both Monnica and her bishop can be seen as representative images of the saving Christ.

4.3 A Note on the 'iuuenis splendidus'

At this juncture, a brief comment may be added on the '*iuuenis splendidus*' in *conf.* 3,19. In this section not only Monnica appears as acting person, but in a dream she encounters 'a glorious young man coming to her, joyous (*hilarem*) and smiling (*adrientem*) at her'⁶⁹ and also conversing with her. What matters

67 Cf. e.g. the beginning of *conf.* 3,21 (*CCL* 27,38): 'Et dedisti *alterum responsum* interim, quod recole'. The first answer is given with Monnica's dream, the second through the addressed bishop.

68 J. van Oort, 'Manichaean Imagery of Christ as God's Right Hand', *VC* 72 (2018) 184–205, last version in *Mani and Augustine* (n. 36), 89–110. Cf. ch. 9.

69 *Conf.* 3,19 (*CCL* 27,37–38): 'Vidit enim [sc. in her dream] se stantem in quadam regula lignea et aduenientem ad se iuuenem splendidum hilarem atque adrientem sibi ...'.

here is not what that 'certain wooden rule(r)' was on which she stood, nor what 'the glorious young man' discussed with her. It is important to note that this glorious young man bears important similarities to Lady Continence in *conf.* 8,27: she too is *hilaris* and *arridens*⁷⁰ and in a sense even *splendida*.⁷¹ In any case, she too is a celestial figure who evokes the wavering Augustine: 'what are you standing in yourself and not standing?'⁷² This clearly recalls the wooden ruler on which Monnica sees her son *standing* with her in *conf.* 3,19, as this is also explicitly stated at the end of *conf.* 8,30: 'standing on that rule of faith on which You had revealed me to her so many years ago'.⁷³ In the structure of the *Confessions*, the end of Book 3 anticipates the end of Book 8: both reflect each other.

Whether the same can be said of the *iuuenis splendidus* of *conf.* 3,19 and the '*puer an puella*' of *conf.* 8, 29 I want to leave undecided here. Pierre Courcelle, in a separate chapter in his *Les Confessions de saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire*, mentions several examples of visions from North Africa's Christian tradition (in particular the third and fourth centuries) in which a celestial being appears, 'tantôt le Christ, tantôt un ange, tantôt un martyr ou un défunt quelconque'.⁷⁴ He also reports (and illustrates from various texts) that this character usually presents itself 'sous des traits souriants, enjoués, *hilaris*, signe d'une félicité spirituelle qu'il communique au visionnaire' and that it often concerns a '*iuuenis*', sometimes also a *puer* or an *adolescent*.⁷⁵ The parallels with Augustine are striking and one may likely conclude that his descriptions stay in this particular Christian tradition. There is, however, also the speaking figure of the Manichaean Syzygos, equally heavenly, smiling, sent forth by Jesus the Splendour.⁷⁶ Further research should reveal to what (probable) extent Augustine ingeniously brings together both traditions for his different types of readers.

70 *Conf.* 8,27 (CCL 27,130): '... hilaris ... Et inridebat me inrisione hortatoria ...'

71 Cf. *ibidem*: '... aperiebatur ... blandiens ... inridebat me inrisione hortatoria ...'.

72 *Ibid.*: 'Quid in te stas et non stas?'

73 *Conf.* 8,30 (CCL 27,132): '... stans in ea regula fidei, in qua me ante tot annos ei [sc. to Monnica] reuelaueras ...'.

74 P. Courcelle, *Les Confessions de saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1963, ch. v: 'Autobiographie et allégorie dans les « visions » africaines', 127–136 (129).

75 Courcelle, *Les Confessions*, 129.

76 See e.g. C.M. Stang, *Our Divine Double*, Cambridge, Mass.-London: Harvard University Press 2016, ch. 4: 'Mani and His Twin-Companion', 145–184.

4.4 *Augustine Redeemed 'de hac profunda caligine'*

Augustine's rescue is 'from this deep darkness' (*de hac profunda caligine*). When (as usual) the phrase is translated in this way, a reference to the Manichaean Kingdom of Darkness also present in *Kephalaion* 58 may be heard: the sons of the Mother of Life 'were conjoined with the darkness (*keke*) and the poison'. However, Augustine does not only know of the Kingdom of Darkness (*tenebrae*),⁷⁷ but as a real insider he speaks of *caligo*, 'gloom, thick mist, smoke'. One may compare the Coptic word *kapnos* (from Greek *kapnós*, 'smoke') which refers to a specific part of the Kingdom of Darkness.⁷⁸ In addition, as we know through Augustine, in the Latin translation of Mani's *Epistula Fundamenti* the word *caligo* specifies the inhabitants of a particular part of the Realm of Darkness.⁷⁹ Elsewhere Augustine appears to allude to this word.⁸⁰

4.5 *Biblical Quotes and Manichaean Reading*

Apart from the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15) as well as the narrative about the youth of Nain (Lk 7:11–17),⁸¹ various biblical quotes and reminiscences are ingeniously woven into our just discussed text at the beginning of *conf.* 3,19–21.⁸² In addition, there is the 'Manichaean reading' which deepens the meaning of various section parts and especially points to the typical place of Monnica and her bishop. Finally there are the curious words '*istae lacrimae*' in *conf.* 3,21 which can now be viewed from the full perspective of the entire section *conf.* 3,19–21.

77 '*Regnum tenebrarum*' in e.g. *c. Sec.* 3 (CSEL 25,909); *mor.* 2,5 (CSEL 90,91); cf. '*tenebrae*' in e.g. *c. ep. fund.* 15 and 20 (CSEL 25,210.217); *haer.* 46,7 (CCL 46,314); etc.

78 See in the *Kephalaia* (ed. Polotsky-Böhlig) e.g. *Keph.* 33,3–4; 68,16–17; 69,13 etc. *Keph.* 30,25 mentions 'the King of the world of smoke' (*prro mpkosmos mpkapnos*) as the ruler of one of the five storehouses (*tamieīai*) that make up 'the Land of Darkness' (*pkah mpkeke*).

79 See the fragment quoted by Augustine in *c. ep. Man.* 15 (CSEL 25,212): 'pari more introrsum (sc. as part of the *terra tenebrarum*) gens caliginis ac fumi plena, in qua morabatur inmanis princeps omnium et dux ...'. Cf. *c. ep. Man.* 28 (CSEL 25,228). Perhaps another part of this fragment resonates in Augustine's wording; cf. his '*profunda caligine*' with Mani's '*erat tenebrarum terra profunda* and *inmensa magnitudine*'.

80 Apart from the end of *conf.* 3,20 (CCL 27,38): 'et me tamen dimittebas adhuc uolui et inuolui illa *caligine*', see e.g. *mor.* 1,3 (CSEL 90,5): 'Sed quia *caligantes* hominum mentes consuetudine tenebrarum ...'.

81 Cf. e.g. L.C. Ferrari, 'The Theme of the Prodigal Son in Augustine's Confessions', *RA* 12 (1977) 105–118 (although he does not mention *conf.* 3,19). For Lk 7, see e.g. *conf.* 6,1.

82 E.g. Ps. 143 (Hebr. 144):7; Ps. 85 (Hebr. 86):13; Gal. 5:5.

4.6 '... istae lacrimae ...' and Their Meaning

'Such tears' points to a certain quality of Monnica's tears, namely that they are a sign of God's future answering of her prayers. Many years ago, the Dutch scholar Arent Jan Wensinck published his study *Some Semitic Rites of Mourning and Religion*.⁸³ He indicated that in Syrian Christianity the view was held by Bar Hebraeus, Isaac of Nineveh and already Ephrem Syrus that tears are an indication of God's answering one's prayer.⁸⁴ Weeping was considered a *charisma*,⁸⁵ and Wensinck also pointed out the same meaning in the Qur'an.⁸⁶

It appears that in the Manichaean Bêma Festival this idea about the meaning of tears was present as well. As we have seen, it was a feast of sorrow and joy: sorrow over Mani's martyrdom and one's own sins; joy over his soul's delivery and the deliverance of one's own soul. The sorrow was accompanied by penitential weeping while more profuse tears indicated a surer answer to one's prayer.⁸⁷

In the statement of Monnica's bishop, recorded by her most accurate and insightful son, we find this particularly Eastern Christian⁸⁸ and Manichaean view reflected in *conf.* 3,21. '*Istae lacrimae*' are *those* tears, *such* tears that come often and in large quantities. They are a sure sign that Monnica's prayer will certainly be heard. As it is stated three times at the beginning of the passage *conf.* 3,19–21: '*exaudisti eam*'.

83 A.J. Wensinck, *Some Semitic Rites of Mourning and Religion. Studies on their Origin and Mutual Relation* (Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen te Amsterdam, Afdeeling Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, Deel XVIII, N^o. 1), Amsterdam: Johannes Müller 1917.

84 Wensinck, *Mourning and Religion*, 79–84.

85 Wensinck, *ibidem*, esp. 82–83.

86 Wensinck, *ibid.*, 84–89 (translated quote of Q 17:107–109 [not 17:10 ff.!] and discussion of its religio-historical context).

87 E.g. *Psalm of the Bêma* 241, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 45,5–8: 'Look upon our tears that are hidden, that are seen by (?) ... / ... / ... spread thy mercy over us and wash us clean of [the things / which are] evil'. For the same idea at (assumedly) other occasions, see e.g. *Psalm of Heracleides* [without number, a dialogue between the risen Lord and Mary], Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 187,9–10: '... , I appeared (?) [not] / to thee, until I saw thy tears and thy grief ...' and the next *Psalm of Heracleides*, Allberry 188,13: 'I will not stem my tears, o powerful one (*hikanós*), unless thou wipe away my sin'. See also my discussion of Augustine's tears in Milan's garden in ch. 7: 'Augustine's Conversion Story'.

88 Cf. e.g. M.L. Lot-Borodine, 'Le mystère du « don des larmes » dans l'Orient chrétien', *Vie Spirituelle*, Supplément 28 (1936) 65–110. With e.g. John Cassian it also appears in the Western and especially monastic tradition.

4.7 ‘... filius ... lacrimarum ...’

A final and, in all likelihood, most essential remark: the expression ‘*filius lacrimarum*’ may even be wholly Manichaean. A few years ago, Nils Arne Pedersen published two pages from the unpublished *first* part of the Coptic Manichaean Psalmbook.⁸⁹ Pedersen’s provisional edition is based on his own reading of the original papyrus, but a photo is also published in the facsimile edition of this first part by Søren Giversen.⁹⁰ Plate 127 contains a reasonably surviving part of Psalm 82. The stanza referred to by Pedersen as ‘Verbot gegen Totenklage’ reads in his translation:

Meine Brüder, meine Väter des Fleisches (*sarx*)! Weine nicht [über mich], denn ich bin nicht der Sohn des Weinens! Ich bin zu meinem ... aufgestiegen, indem meine Hand mit Kränzen beladen ist, indem das [Ehrengewand] (*stolé*) mich umhüllt.⁹¹

The psalm belongs to the so-called *synaxis*-psalms, the original Greek word *synaxis* referring to the Manichaean religious gathering. This was probably a gathering in which a ceremony for the dead took place. The prohibition of any lamentation about the dead is remarkably often found in the so-called ‘Psalms to Jesus’ in the second part of the Coptic Psalmbook.⁹² For the Manichaean, after all, death is the release from the prison of the body and, for the *electi*, the entrance to the Realm of Light. But the expression *pšêre mprime*, ‘the son of the weeping’, is, as far as we now know, wholly unique to this Psalm.

The Coptic *pšêre mprime* is very closely related to the Latin *filius lacrimarum*. In a note, Pedersen remarks that *pšêre mprime* can be translated not only passively as ‘einer, der gehört zu denen, um die geweint wird’ or actively as ‘einer, der weint’ (where ‘der Sohn des Weinens’ may be a Semitism), but

89 N.A. Pedersen, ‘Über einen manichäisch-koptischen Hymnus von der Erlösung der Seele (das manichäische Psalmenbuch, teil (sic) 1: Faksimileausgabe Band III. Tafel 127–128)’, in S. Giversen a.o. (eds.), *The Nag Hammadi Texts in the History of Religions. Proceedings of the International Conference at the Royal Academy of Sciences and Letters in Copenhagen, September 19–24, 1995*, Copenhagen: Hans Reitzels Vorlag 2002, 199–210. The edition of the Psalmbook already published in 1938 by Allberry (see above, n. 56) comprises the better preserved *second* part.

90 S. Giversen, *The Manichaean Coptic Papyri in the Chester Beatty Library. Facsimile Edition. Volume III, Psalm Book Part I*, Genève: Patrick Cramer Éditeur 1988.

91 Pedersen, ‘Hymnus von der Erlösung der Seele’, 203.

92 Cf. Pedersen, *ibidem*, 208 and 210 n. 18.

also that *pšère mprime* may have been a terminus technicus used in more or less formulaic prohibitions to weep over the dead.⁹³

5 Conclusion

Our final conclusion is that Monnica's bishop knew the expression from his Manichaean past and that he uses it here in conscious reference to this past in an (for the insiders clear) anti-Manichaean meaning. Rightly, in his opinion, Monnica *wept* over her son, and for that very reason he will not be lost.

93 Pedersen, *ibid.*, 210 n. 19. For the passage now see also: S.G. Richter (ed., transl.), *The Manichaean Coptic Papyri in the Chester Beatty Library: Psalm Book*, Part 1, Fasc. 1, *Psalmengruppe 1, Die Sonnehymnen des Herakleides, Die Synaxis-Psalmen*, Turnhout: Brepols 2022, 266–267. Richter translates *pšère mprime* more inclusively and less literally with 'Kind des Weinens', but Coptic *šère* means first of all 'son' next to 'child', as in Manichaean expressions such as 'Sons (*šère*) of Primal Man' or 'Sons (*šère*) of the Living Spirit'.

A Note on ‘*substomachans*’ (*conf.* 3,21)

1 Introduction

*In *conf.* 3,21 Augustine uses a curious word. It is in the passage which contains the famous phrase that ‘a son of such tears cannot be lost’. The immediately preceding text of *conf.* 3,21 is on an African bishop who, at Monnica’s insistence that he should have an interview with her son, gives her a twofold answer. On the one hand, he says that Augustine by reading (*legendo*) will discover what an error (*error*) and impiety (*impietas*) the Manichaean heresy (*haeresis*) is. On the other hand, he imparts that he himself had been brought to the Manichaeans by his mother and after getting acquainted with their books realized that he had to leave the sect (*secta*). Literally it then reads:

Quae cum ille dixisset atque illa nollet acquiescere, sed instaret magis deprecando et ubertim flendo, ut me uideret et mecum dissereret, ille iam substomachans taedio: “Vade” inquit “a me; ita uiuas, fieri non potest, ut filius istarum lacrimarum pereat.”¹

In preliminary translation:

When he (sc. the bishop) had said this and she (sc. Monnica) was unwilling to agree but pressed him with more begging and copiously shedding tears to see me and debate with me, he became at last irritated and bored: “Go away from me,” he said, “as you live, it is not possible that the son of these tears be lost!”

2 ‘*Substomachans*’

What concerns us here is the word *substomachans*. Lexicographers have noted for centuries that we are dealing with an Augustinian *hapax*, a neologism

* First publication in *Vigiliae Christianae* 77 (2023) 333–337, slightly adapted.

1 *Sancti Augustini Confessionum libri XIII quos post Martinum Skutella iterum edidit Lucas Verheijen*, Turnhout: Brepols 1990, 39.

formed by Augustine and found in Late Antiquity only with (and, I tentatively assume, adopted by) his formidable adversary Julian of Eclanum.²

The word and its context are in fact difficult to translate. The phrase in which *substomachans* occurs, reads in modern English translations: 'He was now irritated and a little vexed and said' (Henry Chadwick);³ 'A little vexed, he answered' (Maria Boulding);⁴ 'he got a bit fed up' (Philip Burton);⁵ 'Eventually he became irritated by the monotony of this and told her' (Carolyn J.-B. Hammond).⁶ Frequently quoted French translations read: 'Alors l'évêque, ennuyé, lui dit non sans quelque impatience' (Pierre de Labriolle)⁷ and 'Et lui, un peu gagné déjà par l'impatience et l'ennui, de répondre: ...' (Eugène Tréhorel, André Bouissou).⁸ It was and remains difficult to reproduce in a correct, complete and also fine idiomatic translation both the hitherto unique word '*substomachans*' (partic. of *sub-stomachor*: 'être un peu irrité, s'impatisier un peu'; Albert Blaise)⁹ and the noun '*taedium*' ('disgust, weariness, boredom')¹⁰ and also '*iam*' (e.g. 'now; immediately, soon; henceforth; in that case, as an immediate consequence').¹¹ With regard to this last word, moreover, a rather curious interpretation takes place in the translations: apparently to positively represent the character of Monnica's bishop, '*iam*' is used to assert that he became '*a little vexed*', '*a bit fed up*' or that he was '*non sans quelque impatience*' and '*un*

2 See below.

3 *Saint Augustine, Confessions. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Henry Chadwick*, Oxford: OUP 1991, 51.

4 *The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21st Century, The Confessions, I/1, Introduction, translation and notes Maria Boulding*, Hyde Park, New York: New City Press 1997, 91.

5 Ph. Burton, 'Augustine and Language', in M. Vessey (ed.), *A Companion to Augustine*, Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell 2012, 113–124 (120).

6 *Augustine, Confessions, Books 1–8. Edited and Translated by Carolyn J.-B. Hammond*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 2014, 131.

7 *Saint Augustin, Confessions, Livres I–VIII. Texte établi et traduit par Pierre de Labriolle*, Tome 1, Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1925, 63.

8 *Bibliothèque Augustinienne, Œuvres de saint Augustin*, 13, *Les Confessions*, Livres I–VIII. Texte de l'édition de M. Skutella, Introduction et notes par A. Solignac, Traduction de E. Tréhorel et G. Bouissou, Brugge/Paris: Desclée de Brouwer 1962, 405.

9 A. Blaise, *Dictionnaire Latin-Français des auteurs chrétiens. Revue spécialement pour le vocabulaire théologique par Henri Chirat*, Turnhout: Brepols 1954, 788.

10 See e.g. the various editions of *Cassell's Latin-English Dictionary*; Blaise, s.v.: 'ennui, dégoût'; 'ennui, chagrin, douleur, deuil'; 'maladie'; *LSJ*, s.v.: 'weariness, irksomeness, tediousness; loathing, disgust (not freq. till after the Aug. period; perhaps not at all in Cic. or Caes.)'. *TLL*, s.v. 'taedium' has not yet appeared.

11 Cassell, s.v.; Blaise, s.v.: 'et maintenant, et puis; donc; comme'.

peu gagné.¹² As far as I can see, no classical or Augustinian text gives any reason to interpret 'iam' in such a 'softening' way.¹³

In order to possibly find a solution for all this, it may be important to pay attention to the variants in the manuscripts. The phrase '*iam substomachans taedio*' sounds rather unfortunate (because, after all, it contains two possibly redundant words), which apparently is how the scribes of the manuscripts also experienced it. The manuscript S(essorianus), famous for its variant '*de diuina domo*' in *conf.* 8,29, omits '*taedio*' and so does Pius Knöll in his formerly noted editions,¹⁴ followed critically by, for example, John Gibb and William Montgomery in their also prestigious edition.¹⁵ However, the most recent edition in the wake of Martinus Skutella maintains '*taedio*'.¹⁶ Although it is clear that without '*taedio*' the phrase runs more smoothly, the critical principle '*proclivi lectioni praestat ardua*' remains to be preferred.

3 Taking Into Account the Manichaean Background

Perhaps we understand why Augustine introduces the wording '*substomachans*' when we consider the Manichaean background of Monnica's bishop. At the same time, we should also take into account the Manichaean background of Augustine who consciously formulates this way. As almost every Latin dictionary notes, '*stomachor*' in the sense of 'to be angry; irritated; vexed' was well known by his great example Cicero. The apparently unique addition of the preposition '*sub*' to '*stomachans*' emphasizes the emergence from deep within the stomach (*stomachus*). A reader acquainted with Manichaean terminology and habit immediately thinks of the daily Manichaean meal as just described by

12 Better in my opinion is the German translation *Aurelius Augustinus, Confessiones Bekenntnisse. Lateinisch/Deutsch*. Übersetzt, herausgegeben und kommentiert von Kurt Flasch und Burkhard Mojsisch ..., Stuttgart 2009, 145: '... sagte er ihr *nicht ohne einigen* Verdruss'. Cf. the older and also widespread German translation *Augustinus, Bekenntnisse. Lateinisch und Deutsch*. Eingeleitet, übersetzt und erläutert von Joseph Bernhart ..., Frankfurt am Main 1987 (copyright 1955): 'da sagte er, *schon* im Ton des Überdrusses' (135).

13 Apart from the various lexica as mentioned above, see e.g. *TLL* s.v. 'iam'.

14 See, apart from his 1896-edition in *CSEL* 33, e.g. *S. Avreli Avgvstini Confessionvm libri tredecim* ex recognitione P. Knöll, editio stereotypa impressio nova, Lipsiae: Teubner 1926 (first impression of this editio minor: Lipsiae: Teubner 1898), 52. Literally S reads, according to Knöll: '*substhomacans*'.

15 *The Confessions of Augustine*. Edited by J. Gibb and W. Montgomery, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1927, 77.

16 *S. Avreli Avgvstini Confessionvm libri XIII edidit M. Skvella*. Editionem correctiorem curauit H. Jvergens et W. Schavb, Stvtgardiae et Lipsiae: Teubner 1996, 53.

Augustine in Book 3 of the *Confessions*: when a Manichaean *sanctus* had eaten a fig, he breathed during his prayer or when he belched out (*ructando*) parts of God.¹⁷

It is almost certain that Augustine, by speaking of '*substomachans*', alludes to this '*ructare*'. In his work *contra Faustum*, '*ructare*' appears at several instances. In *c. Faust.* 2,5 Augustine imparts that the Manichaean Christ, who is present in the earth and all that it produces, 'needs to be saved by you, by your eating and belching (*ructatis*)'.¹⁸ In the same way it is clearly spoken of *ructare* in *c. Faust.* 5,10, 6,4 and 20,13.¹⁹ We also hear from Ephrem Syrus, for example, that the activity of 'belching out' was a standard practice in Manichaean circles.²⁰ '*Substomachans*' in *conf.* 3,21 subtly appears to recall this practice. An appropriate translation of '*ille iam substomachans taedio*' therefore seems to be: 'he at last belched out in weariness'.

In the previous chapter I indicated how much the statement '*filius istarum lacrimarum*' is reminiscent of Manichaean terminology.²¹ That terminology also sounds in '*substomachans*': it recalls the Manichaean rite of 'belching'.

4 Julian of Eclanum's Remark

Curiously, the term only appears once again in Augustine's time. Julian of Eclanum, Augustine's contemporary who was thoroughly acquainted with Ma-

17 *Conf.* 3,18 (CCL 27,37): 'Quam tamen ficum si comedisset aliquis sanctus alieno sane, non suo scelere decerptam, misceret uisceribus et anhelaret de illa angelos, immo uero particulas dei gemendo in oratione atque *ructando*'. Cf. e.g. *conf.* 4,1.

18 *C. Faust.* 2,5 (CSEL 25,258): 'unde ista sacrilega deliramenta uos cogunt non solum in caelo atque in omnibus stellis, sed etiam in terra atque in omnibus, quae nascuntur in ea, confixum et conligatum atque concretum Christum dicere, non iam saluatorem uestrum sed a uobis saluandum, cum ea manducatis atque *ructatis*.'

19 *C. Faust.* 5,10 (CSEL 25,282): 'aut si melioris meriti sunt (sc. the *auditores*), in melones et cucumeres uel in aliquos alios cibos ueniant, quos uos manducaturi estis, ut uestris *ructatibus* cito purgentur'; *c. Faust.* 6,4 (CSEL 25,288): 'si autem occiduntur (sc. the plants), cum decerpuntur, quomodo eis inest uita, cui purgandae atque recreandae manducando atque *ructando* uos adseritis subuenire?'; *c. Faust.* 20,13 (CSEL 25,553): 'uobis autem per fabulam uestram in escis omnibus Christus ligatus adponitur adhuc ligandus uestris uisceribus soluendusque *ructatibus*'. One may compare, for instance, *mor.* 2,30 (CSEL 90,114): 'Quid porro insanius dici aut cogitari potest, hominem boletos, orizama, tubera, placentas, caroenum, piper, laser distento uentre cum gratulatione *ructantem* ...'.

20 C.W.S. Mitchell, S. Ephraim's *Prose Refutations of Mani, Marcion and Bardaisan* ..., London: Williams & Norgate 1912, Vol. 1: *The Discourses addressed to Hypatius*, xliii.

21 See ch. 3: 'Monnica's Bishop and the "*filius istarum lacrimarum*"'.

nichaeae doctrine and terminology, accuses Hippo's bishop of traducianism and sees in it a 'belched out' relic of his former belief:

Una vobis sunt instituta, una mysteria, unaque pericula. Et substomacheris, si senis Manis soboles nuncupere?²²

Your doctrines are the same, your sacraments, your perils. And you belch out (all this) because you are called the offspring of old Mani?

Julian may have picked up the apparently new word in Augustine's *Confessions*. Earlier, he found the word '*meribibula*' there.²³ An (unproven) possibility is of course that '*substomachans*' already occurred elsewhere.²⁴

5 Conclusion

What strikes me is how much the curious word again seems to refer to everyday Manichaeae practice. In my view, the original occurrence of '*substomachans*' in *conf.* 3,21 is a subtle wordplay, a pun particularly understood by readers familiar with Manichaeae terminology and practice. I propose to translate:

When he had said this and she was unwilling to agree but pressed him with more begging and copiously shedding tears to see me and debate with me, *he then belched out in tediousness*: "Go away from me," he said, "as you live, it is not possible that the son of these tears be lost!"

²² *C. Iul. imp.* 6,16 (*MPL* 45,1536; *CSEL* 85/2, 342).

²³ Cf. *conf.* 9,18 and *c. Iul. imp.* 1,68.

²⁴ Cf. J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine, Confessions*, 2, *Commentary on Books 1–7*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992, 202.

Augustine's *De pulchro et apto* (conf. 4,20–27)

1 Introduction

*The contents of the work of Augustine's youth, *De pulchro et apto*, are largely shrouded in mysteries. Everything we know about it is related by Augustine some twenty years later in *conf.* 4,20–27. The passage is too long to be cited here in its entirety and analysed in every detail. I do, however, briefly mention the most important opinions that have been put forward about the work.

In 1966 Takeshi Katô published the (in our context) most cited study 'Melodia interior. Sur le traité *De pulchro et apto*'.¹ He refers to Manichaean sources from Egyptian Medinet Madi for Augustine's speaking of 'beauty' and some other aspects, but—although the evidence in his article is evocative rather than conclusive—one cannot agree with later criticism that none of the texts he puts forward proves direct or indirect influence from Manichaean sources.² In the course of this chapter I will return to some of the texts he cites.

Ten years after Katô, Donald A. Cress again reviewed several possible sources, but his article does not designate any of them as decisive.³ Cress' main conclusion is that Augustine's work does not actually have 'beauty' as its main theme, but 'love'.⁴ The already cited article by Jean-Michel Fontanier delved deeper into a number of possible philosophical and rhetorical influences (Plato's [?] *Hippias Maior*; more likely Stoic coloured texts from Cicero).⁵ However, he comes—quite rightly—to no firm conclusion and winds up by

* Earlier versions published as 'Notes on Augustine's *De pulchro et apto* and its Manichaean Context', *REA* 66 (2020) 293–324 and 'Augustine's *De pulchro et apto* and its Manichaean Context' in: *Manichaeism and Early Christianity. Selected Papers from the 2019 Pretoria Congress and Consultation*, ed. J. van Oort (*NHMS* 99), Leiden-Boston: Brill 2020, 253–287.

1 Takeshi Katô, 'Melodia interior. Sur le traité *De pulchro et apto*', *REA* 12 (1966) 229–240.

2 J.-M. Fontanier, 'Sur le traité d'Augustin *De pulchro et apto*: convenance, beauté et adaptation', *RSPT* 73 (1989) 413–421: 'T. Katô affirme l'influence, directe ou indirecte, des écrits manichéens sur le traité du jeune Augustin. Malheureusement aucun élément textuel précis dans les fragments de Médinêt Mâdi mis en avant par l'auteur, ne vient corroborer une telle hypothèse' (413).

3 D.A. Cress, 'Hierius & St. Augustine's Account of the lost 'De Pulchro et Apto': Confessions IV,13–15', *AS* 7 (1976) 153–163.

4 Cress, 'Augustine's Account', 162: 'Augustine's first treatise dwelt only incidentally on beauty, in spite of its title. Primarily, it must have been a treatise on love'.

5 Fontanier, 'Sur le traité d'Augustin', 414–418.

pointing to parallels in Augustine's later works.⁶ Virtually the same goes for Fontanier's recent lemma 'Pulchro et apto (De –)' in the *Augustinus-Lexikon*, which mainly repeats his 1989 article.⁷

In the meantime Kyung Burchill-Limb has offered some reflections from antique philosophy and rhetoric;⁸ her main conclusion is that—in Augustine's whole oeuvre—"the idea of *amare pulchrum* itself never changed!"⁹ Apart from the just mentioned lexicon article by Fontanier, the most recent discussion of *De pulchro et apto* of which I am aware is by Jason David BeDuhn.¹⁰ Some relevant comments in the more general works about Augustine and his *Confessiones* will be mentioned later.

In addition to the scholarly observations made so far, I would like to contribute a number of annotations which emphasize the Manichaean context of the work. In my view, it will become evident that both its title and many facets of its contents are first and foremost understandable from within Manichaean texts and patterns of thought.

2 The Manichaean Work's Literary Form and Dedication to Hierius

First of all, I remark that the writing dates from Augustine's Manichaean period. He says this more or less emphatically at the start of his memoir about *De pulchro et apto* in *conf.* 4,20:

Haec *tunc* non noueram et amabam pulchra inferiora et ibam in profundum et dicebam amicis meis: 'Num amamus aliquid nisi pulchrum? Quid est ergo pulchrum? Et quid est pulchritudo? Quid est quod nos allicit et conciliat rebus, quas amamus? Nisi enim esset in eis decus et species, nullo modo nos ad se mouerent.'¹¹

*At that time*¹² I did not know¹³ this.¹⁴ And I loved beautiful things of lower degree and I was going down into the depth;¹⁴ and I said to my friends:

6 Fontanier, 'Sur le traité d'Augustin', 418–421.

7 J.-M. Fontanier, 'Pulchro et apto (De –)', *AL* IV, Fasc. 7–8, Basel: Schwabe 2018, 1004–1007.

8 K.-Y. Burchill-Limb, "Philokalia" in Augustine's *De pulchro et apto*, *Aug(L)* 53 (2003) 69–75.

9 Burchill-Limb, "Philokalia", 74.

10 J.D. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, 1: *Conversion and Apostasy*, 373–388 C.E., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2010, 98–102.

11 *Conf.* 4,20 (*CCL* 27,50).

12 I.e., about 380–381, still during his Manichaean years.

13 Also this 'non noueram' (in opposition to Mani's and the Manichaeans' claim of possessing and proclaiming the 'truth') is very typical of Augustine's critical view of his Manichaean

'Do we love anything but the beautiful? What, then, is a beautiful object? And what is beauty? What is it that attracts us and wins over to the things we love? For unless there were *decus* and *species* in them, they would in no way move us towards them.'

Later I will return to the words *decus* and *species*; here I emphasize that his discussion is being held with *Manichaeans* friends.

On the basis of the just quoted questions it is also worth noting that in all probability Augustine's first work—just like his early works from Cassiciacum, the *Soliloquia*¹⁶ and several of his later writings—was written in the form of a dialogue, a well-known literary form not only in rhetorical-philosophical circles but certainly also among the Manichaeans.¹⁷ One may see confirmation of this dialogical character in Augustine's words towards the end of *conf.* 4, 23: '... and that "beautiful and harmonious" ... was a topic my mind enjoyed turning over and reflecting upon'.

The last quoted words are part of the following full sentence:

Et tamen pulchrum illud atque aptum, unde ad eum scripseram, libenter animo uersabam ob os contemplationis meae et nullo conlaudatore mirabar.¹⁸

And yet that 'beautiful and harmonious' about which I had written to him, I gladly let it turn over in my mind before the mouth of my contemplation, and I admired it without anyone praising it with me.

The (fairly literal translated) full sentence raises a number of interesting issues. The phrase '*unde ad eum scripseram*' refers to a certain Hierius. Apart from his mention in two subscriptions in manuscripts of Ps.-Quintilian,¹⁹ we know

period; cf. e.g. *conf.* 3,12: '... quia non noueram malum non esse nisi priuationem boni ...'; *ibidem*: 'Et non noueram deum esse spiritum ...'; 3,13: 'Et non noueram iustitiam ueram interiorem ...'; 4,3: 'Non enim amare te noueram, qui nisi fulgores corporeos cogitare non noueram'; 5,8: '... ista uero quia non nouerat [sc. Manichaeus]'; 5,19: 'Et quoniam cum de deo meo cogitare uellem, cogitare nisi moles corporum non noueram ...'; etc.

14 Sc. all that has been said in the preceding paragraphs about the *true* love of things in God.

15 Cf. '*ima*' in *conf.* 4,27; with regard to the Manichaeans and their opinions also e.g. *conf.* 3,11: '... quibus gradibus deductus in *profunda inferi* ...'.

16 Some researchers consider this work as belonging to the Cassiciacum dialogues as well.

17 See e.g. several psalms in *A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, Part II, edited [and translated] by C.R.C. Allberry, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1938 and also various Parthian hymns.

18 *Conf.* 4,23 (CCL 27,52).

19 Cf. e.g. *PLRE* 1,431 and also J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine, Confessions*, II: *Commentary on Books 1–7*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992, 250–251.

nothing about this Hierius except what Augustine reports here and in *conf.* 4,21: he was an orator in Rome (*Romanae urbis oratorem*), originally a Syrian who first learned good Greek and then in Latin had become an admirable orator (... *Syro, docto prius graecae facundiae, post in latina etiam dictor mirabilis* ...), a man also well versed in philosophical issues (... *scientissimus rerum ad studium sapientiae pertinentium* ...). Considering that he was so much praised by Augustine's friends and also admired by the Manichaean Augustine himself, one might wonder: was he also a Manichaean? His great linguistic knowledge (so characteristic of the Manichaeans) could further indicate this; as perhaps his familiarity with philosophical issues.²⁰ Moreover, he was a Syrian: it is not only a known fact that Mani came from the Syro-Mesopotamian world and composed nearly all his works in Syriac, but also that his message (like that of other 'gnostic' movements) was first and very successfully spread in the Syriac speaking areas.

The words '*nullo conlaudatore mirabar*' have given rise to curious translations and similar reflections. A well-known rendering such as 'Although no one else admired the book, I thought very well of it myself'²¹ gives the impression that Augustine would have been spiritually isolated and not understood by anyone. However, this seems to be contradicted by his initially reported and rather strong emphasis on his circle of friends. In my view, '*nullo conlaudatore*' (*conlaudator*, sg.) will specifically refer to the aforementioned Hierius, of which Augustine just told in *conf.* 4,23 that he did not know whether the highly acclaimed *rhetor* would approve of his writing. I therefore propose the following paraphrased rendering of this part of the last full sentence of *conf.* 4,23, which does not accidentally start with '*et tamen*':

And yet [despite the fact that Hierius' judgement about my book was unknown to me] ... I admired it, even without co-praiser.

There may have been a special reason for Augustine's concern that his writing would please Hierius. In *conf.* 4,23 he also reveals: 'It mattered a great deal to me to make my discourse (*sermo*) and my studies (*studia*) known to that man. If he approved of them, I would have been vastly enflamed; but if he disapproved, my heart, vain (*uanum*) and lacking Your solidity (*soliditas*), would

20 As was already the case with Mani himself. Cf. e.g. *conf.* 5,8. One may also compare, for instance, the Manichaeans in the school of Alexander of Lycopolis. See also below, p. 96 and n. 146.

21 H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine, Confessions. Translated with an Introduction and Notes*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1991 (several reprints), 67.

be wounded'. *Sermo* can mean 'discourse' and indicate the subject of a discussion. But (again with e.g. Cicero's use) it can also mean 'manner of speaking', 'style'. Could it be that Augustine had a distinct style in mind, i.e., not only a dialogical manner of speaking, but a dialogical *monologue* such as we firstly know from his *Soliloquia*? The just quoted '*animo uersabam ob os contemplationis meae*' do not only seem to indicate the work's dialogical character, but especially its being a monologue.²² Its additional qualifications as being 'vain'²³ and 'lacking your solidity'²⁴ without a doubt refer to its Manichaean character.

The words '*os contemplationis meae*' are also noticeable. I literally translated as 'the *mouth* of my contemplation'. The imagery may have classical roots, although James O'Donnell in his well-known commentary does not provide a better example than '*ante os*' in Cicero's *Rep.* 3,15.²⁵ He also mentions John Gibb's and William Montgomery's comment in their widespread edition of the *Confessiones*: 'An elaborate variation, in the manner of the late rhetoric, on the phrase "ob oculos mentis"'.²⁶ It might be for that reason that most English translations render as 'the *eye* of my mind', or rather similar expressions such as 'a contemplative *eye*', or even 'surveyed'.²⁷

One may wonder whether this is all one can reasonably say of the curious expression. Notable in Augustine's *Confessiones* are the metaphors that appear in the grammatical form of the appositional genitive.²⁸ These include turns of phrase such as '*aures cordis*'²⁹ (*conf.* 1,5); '*aure cordis*'³⁰ (*conf.* 4,10); '*in aure cordis*' (*conf.* 4,16); '*de manu linguae meae*' (*conf.* 5,1); '*foribus oculorum*' (*conf.*

22 One may also compare 'Et ista consideratio scaturriuit in animo meo ex intimo corde meo' in *conf.* 4,20 (CCL 27,51). See further below.

23 Cf. e.g. *conf.* 4,12: 'uanum phantasma'.

24 Cf. e.g. the just in *conf.* 4,23 mentioned 'solidity of [God's] truth' (*soliditas ueritatis*) in contrast to the repeated Manichaean claim (see e.g. *conf.* 3,10) of heralding 'the truth'.

25 O'Donnell, *Augustine*, Confessions, II: *Commentary on Books 1–7*, 254.

26 *The Confessions of Augustine*. Edited by J. Gibb and W. Montgomery, Cambridge: At the University Press 1927, 100.

27 Cf. e.g. E.B. Pusey's translation (1838), printed for instance as a volume of Everyman's Library: *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, London-New York: J.M. Dent-E.P. Dutton 1907 (repr. 1949), 66: 'surveyed'; M. Boulding, transl. *The Confessions* (WSA 1/1), Hyde Park, NY: New City Press 1997, 107: 'a contemplative eye'; C.J.-B. Hammond, ed. and transl., *Augustine, Confessions, Books 1–8* (LCL), Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press 2014, 171: 'my mind's eye'. Cf. e.g. the still leading French translation by E. Tréhorel and G. Bouissou in *BA* 13, 449: 'le regard de ma contemplation'.

28 M.R. Arts, *The Syntax of the Confessions of Saint Augustine*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America 1927, 16–17.

29 Not mentioned by Arts.

30 *Idem*.

6,13), etc.; and also '*os contemplationis*'. These expressions are not found in the Scriptures, not even in the so abundantly metaphorical Psalms which deeply influenced Augustine's masterpiece.³¹ As regards the mouth (*os*), we find metaphorical speech in the *Confessiones* such as '*oris intus animae meae*' (*conf.* 1,21); '*ore cordis*' (*conf.* 9,23); '*in ore cogitationis*' (*conf.* 10,22); '*manus oris mei*' (*conf.* 11,12). The phrase '*os contemplationis meae*' in our passage most closely matches '*in ore cogitationis*' in *conf.* 10,22. There it runs (in context):

Forte ergo sicut de uentre cibus ruminando, sic ista de memoria recordando proferuntur. Cur igitur *in ore cogitationis* non sentitur a disputante, hoc est a reminiscente, laetitiae dulcedo uel amaritudo maestitiae?³²

Perhaps then, even as food is in ruminating brought up from the stomach, so by recollection these (sc. the *perturbationes animi*) are brought up from the memory. But then, why does not the person speaking, that is recollecting, perceive *in the mouth of his contemplation* the sweetness of joy or the bitterness of sorrow?

Quite the same phrase is also found in *Contra Faustum*:

quod enim utile audieris, uelut ab intestino memoriae tamquam ad *os cogitationis* recordandi dulcedine reuocare quid est aliud quam spiritaliter quodam modo ruminare?³³

For what else is it to recall something useful (i.e., some word of wisdom) you have heard—as if from the stomach of memory so to say to *the mouth of contemplation*, because of the sweetness of recalling—but somehow to spiritually ruminate?

The figure of speech with 'mouth' is closely linked here with alimentary language. As we will see in the case of *De pulchro et apto*, this would not be coincidental given the likely 'alimentary' contents of (part of) this work. Anyway, '*os contemplationis*', just as the closely related '*os cogitationis*', seems to be best translated as 'the *mouth* of my contemplation'.

There might be another reason for the literal rendering of '*os*' with 'mouth'. I mention this reason for the sake of completeness and also from the aware-

31 Cf. e.g. G.N. Knauer, *Psalmenzitate in Augustins Konfessionen*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1955.

32 *Conf.* 10,22 (CCL 27,166).

33 *C. Faust.* 6,7 (CSEL 25,295).

ness that Augustine in the *Confessiones* quite often converses ingeniously with his Manichaean (or ex-Manichaean) readers.³⁴ In *De moribus Manichaeorum* we read in his discussion of the three Manichaean seals (*tria signacula*) that, according to the Manichaeans, the seal of the mouth (*signaculum oris*) relates to much more than just nutrients:

Sed cum os, inquit, nomino, omnes sensus qui sunt in capite intelligi uolo ...³⁵

But he [the Manichaean] says,³⁶ when I mention the mouth, I want (you) to understand all the senses that are found in the head ...

It could also be that Augustine in our passage from *conf.* 4,23, when reflecting on his Manichaean treatise, deliberately uses this metaphor of the 'mouth' in such a broad Manichaean sense.

3 The Manichaean Work's Speaking of 'Beauty and Harmony' and Focus on the 'Corporeal'

There are other and even more important elements in Augustine's report which seem to refer to typical Manichaean traits. No doubt the young rhetorician made use of his knowledge of main philosophical themes from the Platonic and Stoic tradition such as acquired through his studying of e.g. Cicero. But we appear to encounter a typical Manichaean basic principle in his exposition on *De pulchro et apto* when he writes that he focused on the forms of *material*

34 Cf. e.g. J. van Oort, 'Augustine's Criticism of Manichaeism: The Case of *Confessions* 3,10 and Its Implications' (1995), revised and updated in *idem*, *Mani and Augustine: Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2020, 245–262; and various other chapters in this collection. See also several studies by A.M. Kotzé, e.g. 'A Protreptic to a Liminal Manichaean at the Centre of Augustine's *Confessiones* 4', in J. van Oort (ed.), *Augustine and Manichaean Christianity. Selected Papers from the First South African Conference on Augustine of Hippo, University of Pretoria, 24–26 April 2012*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2013, 107–135 and, for two other early works of Augustine, Th. Fuhrer, 'Re-coding Manichaean Imagery: The Dramatic Setting of Augustine's *De ordine*', *ibidem*, 51–71 and J. Lössl, 'Augustine on "True Religion": Reflections on Manichaeism in *De vera religione*', *ibid.*, 137–153.

35 *Mor.* 2,19 (*CSEL* 90,104–105).

36 'It is replied'; 'you say'.

things (*per formas corporeas, conf. 4,24*), in which search he (typical of a rhetor in his dialectic activity and—as we have seen—typical of his later works in dialogue form) ‘determined and distinguished’ (*definiebam et distinguedam*). According to him, the beauty (*pulchrum*) is ‘that which is so in itself’ (*quod per se ipsum*) and the harmonious or fitting (*aptum*) ‘that which is graceful because it corresponds to some other thing’ (*quod ad aliquid adcommodatum deceret*). All this does not just remind of ‘Stoic-Ciceronian vocabulary’,³⁷ but particularly parallels a discussion of Augustine in his book against Mani’s *Epistula fundamenti* about the border between the land of light and the land of darkness.³⁸ The starting point there is a passage in Mani’s *Epistula* stating that

iuxta unam uero partem ac latus illius inlustris ac sanctae terrae erat tenebrarum terra profunda et immensa magnitudine.³⁹

near to one section and side of that bright and holy land there was the land of darkness with its deep and immense size.

In his polemical discussion of this word of Mani’s with the directly addressed Manichaeans, Augustine repeatedly points to a generally accepted principle, namely that when a straight side is touched by a straight side, there is harmony (*concordia*) and that such a circumstance is most beautiful (*speciosius*) and most fit (*conuenientius*).⁴⁰ In the continuation of his argument, this discourse about ‘beauty’ (*pulchra; pulchritudinem; pulchrius; pulchritudinem; pulchritudinem; pulchritudinem; speciem; pulchrum; decus*) and ‘harmony’ (*congruerent; concordius; concordabat; congruebat*) constantly returns.⁴¹ Also, Augustine’s remark in *conf. 4,24* that he focused his mind on ‘lines and colours and swollen magnitudes’ will only be understood in the context of his Manichaean thinking and concrete representations: without a doubt the ‘swollen magnitudes’ (*tumentes magnitudines*) are the *corporeal* depictions of both the kingdom or land of the light and its counterpart, the kingdom or land of darkness.⁴²

37 Thus Fontanier, ‘Pulchro et apto (De –)’, 1005: ‘le caractère stoïco-cicéronien du vocabulaire’. Cf. Fontanier, ‘Sur le traité d’Augustin’, 416f., in both instances with reference to M. Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron*, 1: *Cicéron dans la formation et dans l’œuvre de saint Augustin*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1958, e.g. 60 ff.

38 *C. ep. Man.* 26,28–27,29 (*CSEL* 25, 225–227).

39 *C. ep. Man.* 25,28 (*CSEL* 25,224).

40 *C. ep. Man.* 26,28 (*CSEL* 25,226).

41 *C. ep. Man.* 26,28–27,29 (*CSEL* 25, 226–227).

42 Cf. e.g. *conf. 4,26*: ‘... et imaginabar formas corporeas ...’ and ‘... a mea uanitate fingebar tur ex corpore ...’ (*CCL* 27,53) and, moreover, his introductory words to the just referenced

Yet it may be even more interesting to see how the—according to the work's title—apparently main theme of *De pulchro et apto* seems to return in what Augustine reports in *De moribus Manichaeorum*. In that work he explains in detail which criteria the Manichaeans say their food must meet, namely good colour, pleasant smell and sweet taste.⁴³ But, so he wonders in the continuation of his strict-logical (and often sarcastic) reasoning, are the sensual indices of eyes, nose and palate sufficient to determine the presence of a part of God?⁴⁴ He then remarks:

His autem remotis, unde docebitis non modo maiorem dei partem in stirpibus esse quam in carnibus, sed omnino esse aliquid eius in stirpibus? An pulchritudo uos mouet, non quae in suauitate coloris est, sed quae in partium congruentia? Utinam hoc esset. Quando enim corporibus animantium, in quorum forma paria paribus membra respondeant, auderetis distorta ligna conferre? Sed si corporalium sensuum testimoniis delectamini, quod necesse est his qui uim essentiae mente uidere non possunt, quomodo probatis per moram temporis et per obtritiones quasdam fugere de corporibus substantiam boni, nisi quia inde discedit deus, ut asseritis, et de loco in locum migrat? Plenum est dementiae.⁴⁵

But, without these (indices), how can you teach not only that there is a greater part of God in plants than in flesh, but even that there is anything of God in plants at all? Does their *beauty* move you, not that which is in the sweetness of colour but in the *harmony* of their parts? Would that this were so! For then you will be so bold as to compare distorted wood with the bodies of living beings in whose shape equal members correspond to each other! But since you take delight in the testimony of the bodily

discussion in *c. ep. Man.* 26,28–27,29, immediately after the just given quotation from Mani's *Epistula fundamenti*: 'Quid expectamus amplius? tenemus enim, quod iuxta latus erat. quomodo libet iam fingite *figuras* et qualialibet *liniamenta* describite, *moles* certe *imensa terrae tenebrarum* aut recto latere adiungenatur terrae lucis aut curuo aut tortuoso ...' (*c. ep. Man.* 26,28; *CSEL* 25,225).

43 *E.g. mor.* 2,39 (*CSEL* 90,123): 'Primo enim quaero, unde doceatis in frumentis et legumine et oleribus et floribus et pomis inesse istam nescio quam partem dei. Ex ipso coloris nitore, inquirunt, et odoris iucunditate et saporis suauitate manifestum est ...'

44 *Mor.* 2,43 (*CSEL* 90,127): 'Quid igitur restat, nisi ut dicere desinatis habere uos idoneos indices oculos, nares, palatum, quibus diuinae partis praesentiam in corporibus approbetis?' I note that several mss. instead of '*indices*' read '*iudices*'; the best reading, however, seems to be '*indices*': cf. '*indicia*' later in the same chapter.

45 *Ibidem*.

senses, which is necessary for those who cannot see the power of being⁴⁶ with their mind, how do you prove that the substance of the good escapes from bodies in the course of time, and by some kind of attrition, except because God goes out from there, as you claim, and migrates from place to place? This is complete madness.

In the preceding paragraphs Augustine has extensively argued that the sensual manner in which the Manichaeans determine how much light element, i.e., how much of God will be present in the different kinds of food, leads to much illogicality and even many absurdities. But would it not be better to use one's mind (*mens*) to determine God's presence in food, i.e., by observing its beauty (*pulchritudo*) and harmony (*harmony*)? '*Utinam hoc esset*: Would that be the case!' However, the Manichaeans in their complete madness⁴⁷ do not use their mind, but stick to the *bodily* senses of their eyes, nose and palate, which by no means lead to true knowledge of God's real nature.

It seems that Augustine here again reminds both himself and his (directly addressed Manichaean and also other) readers of his former writing *De pulcho et apto*. If so, this is yet another possible indication of the alimentary contents of (part of) his youth writing. One could imagine that the *auditor* Augustine—both in thinking about his own food and in collecting suitable nutriment for the *electi* entrusted to him—has come to these conclusions, and that he himself, when discussing the indicators of God's presence in the food with his friends, laid stress on its beauty which is in the harmony of its parts. In *De moribus* however he also indicates a possible absurdity even of this way of selecting food: 'For *then* you will be so bold as to compare *distorted* wood with the bodies of living beings in whose shape equal members correspond to each other!' Without a doubt 'wood' is synonymous with 'tree' here,⁴⁸ whereas the Manichaeans' high esteem for trees is indicated by Augustine in, for instance, *mor.* 2,55: trees have a rational soul.⁴⁹ Such a high esteem, even in the case of *distorted* wood, easily leads to the said absurdity.

Either way, the Manichaeans in Augustine's *mor.* 2 act and think 'in complete madness'.

46 I.e., the nature or essence, the substance of God. Note Augustine's interesting remark on terminology in *mor.* 2,2: 'essence' (derived from *esse*) is a new term for 'substance'; the ancients did not have these terms but used 'nature' instead of 'essence' and 'substance'.

47 *Dementia*: the usual wordplay on Mani and his teachings.

48 See e.g. *mor.* 2,59 (*CSEL* 90,141): '... arboribus ... in ligno ...'.

49 *Mor.* 2,55 (*CSEL* 90,138): 'Anima namque illa quam rationalem inesse arboribus arbitramini ...'.

Apparently Manichaeian issues on 'beauty' and 'harmony' such as these are already c. 380–381 discussed with Manichaeian friends⁵⁰ and they are explained with (only) *corporeal*, i.e., physical examples.

4 'Not Able to See My Spirit': Not Able to Attain the True Gnosis

It is in this context that Augustine further remarks:

et, quia non poteram ea uidere in animo, putabam me non posse uidere animum. Et cum in uirtute pacem amarem, in uitiositate autem odissem discordiam, in illa unitatem, in ista quandam diuisionem notabam, inque illa unitate mens rationalis et natura ueritatis ac summi boni mihi esse uidebatur, in ista uero diuisione irrationalis uitae nescio quam substantiam, et naturam summi mali, quae non solum esset substantia, sed omnino uita esset et tamen abs te non esset, deus meus, ex quo sunt omnia, miser opinabar. Et illam monadem appellabam tamquam sine ullo sexu mentem, hanc uero dyadem, iram in facinoribus, libidinem in flagitiis, nesciens quid loquerer. Non enim noueram neque didiceram nec ullam substantiam malum esse nec ipsam mentem nostram summum atque incommutabile bonum.⁵¹

And not being able to see these in my spirit, I thought I could not see my spirit. And whereas in virtue I loved the peace, and in viciousness I hated the discord, in the former I distinguished unity, but in the latter a kind of division. It seemed to me as if the rational soul and the nature of truth and of the highest good consisted in that unity. But in that division, there was I know not what substance of irrational life and the nature of the supreme evil, which—I, miserable, opined—was not only a substance, but full life, and yet it was not from You, my God, from whom are all things. And the one I called 'monad', as a mind without sex, the other 'dyad', anger in criminal acts, lust in shameful deeds, not knowing what I was talking about. For I did not know, nor had I learnt that evil is not a substance, nor that our mind is not the supreme and unchangeable good.

50 As perhaps later, in their company, with Faustus; cf. e.g. *conf.* 5,12 (*CCL* 27,63): 'Et eum in omnibus difficilioribus et subtilioribus quaestionibus [i.e., apart from the astronomical / astrological questions mentioned earlier] talem inueniebam'.

51 *Conf.* 4,24 (*CCL* 27,52–53).

‘These’ (*ea*) in the beginning of the text refers to the aforementioned ‘lines and colours and swollen magnitudes’. In chapter 2, I have argued that these terms are most likely an additional proof that Augustine seems to have been familiar with Mani’s *Icon* or *Ārdahang*.⁵² Here he states that—in his search for the nature of the spirit (*natura animi*)—he could not see his spirit, i.e., in real Manichaean parlance, most likely based upon Mani’s *Epistula fundamenti*: that he could not obtain the true *gnosis*,⁵³ simply because he could not see ‘lines, colours and swollen magnitudes’ in his spirit (*in animo*). As argued in chapter two, these ‘lines, colours and swollen magnitudes’ probably refer to the lines, colours, and vast quantities of the Manichaean two kingdoms as depicted in Mani’s *Icon*. In other words, as a Manichaean, Augustine was only able to think corporeal, physical (i.e., light or darkness) substance, but no incorporeal reality, no spiritual entities.

5 Virtue and Vice, Unity and Division

The subsequent words of the long quote *conf.* 4,24 seem to demonstrate the Manichaean orientation of his *De pulchro et apto* as well. Augustine relates that he argued that in ‘virtue’ he loved the peace but in ‘viciousness’ hated the ‘discord’; also, that in virtue he noted its ‘unity’ but in vice ‘a kind of division’. What he further says about the division (*diuisio*) of the vice (*uitiositas*) without a doubt refers to Manichaean ideas: the said division was seen as being caused by some ‘substance’ (*substantia*) of ‘irrational life’ (*uita irrationalis*) and the ‘nature’ (*natura*) of ‘the supreme evil’ (*summum malum*). This evil he also considered not only a substance (*substantia*), but full life (*omnino uita*), even life not stemming from God. All of this is entirely in accordance with the Manichaean descriptions of the kingdom of darkness, its internal division and irrational life as it is so often mentioned by Augustine in his works.⁵⁴ Completely consistent with Neoplatonic thinking, Augustine would later claim that evil is not a substance, but the lack of good (*privatio boni*; cf. Plotinus’ *stér-*

52 ‘Augustine and Mani’s *Icon*’.

53 In the prooemium of his *Epistula fundamenti*, Mani stated (c. *Fel.* 1,16; *CSEL* 25,819): ‘pietas uero spiritus sancti intima pectoris uestri adaperiat, ut ipsis oculis uideatis uestras animas: Indeed, may the grace of the Holy Spirit open up the depths of your heart so that you may see your souls with your own eyes’. Seeing the soul with one’s own eyes is a typical Manichaean expression for having received the *gnosis*. It is already reported in the *Cologne Mani Codex*: Mani recognised in his Syzygos or Double his soul, i.e., his real Self: ‘I recognised him, and understood that I am he from whom I was separated’ (*CMC* 24,10–12).

54 Such as, e.g., in many passages in c. *Faust.*, *haer.* 46 and *mor.* 2,14 ff.

esis tou agathou); in accordance with the Manichaean way of thinking, he here says that evil is not only a 'substance' but also 'life'. In the Manichaean texts one finds repeatedly stated that this life of evil is 'irrational' and therefore divisive; also, that it is *independent* of the Good.⁵⁵ Augustine, in his first writing, is still entirely a Manichaean dualist.

6 Monad and Dyad

'And the one I called "monad", as a mind without sex, the other "dyad", anger in criminal acts, lust in shameful deeds'. The distinction of 'monad' and 'dyad' was especially well known from Pythagoreanism and also Platonism. However, here the distinction is fully interpreted within a Manichaean framework.

In regard to the Monad, it is emphasized that it is a mind without sex. In his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, Augustine's contemporary (and possibly African compatriot) Macrobius reports that the Monad is 'both male and female';⁵⁶ however, this is not the same as '*without sex*'. Rather, the concept of a '*mens sine ullo sexu*' is consistent with the Manichaeans' speaking of the highest Deity as being sexless: the (traditionally so called) 'Father' of Greatness lives surrounded by 'his' countless aeons, which aeons he does not generate but 'calls forth';⁵⁷ Moreover, the Arabic writer al-Biruni tells that in Mani's *Thesaurus* it was stated that '... in the region of delight [i.e., the Land of Light] there is neither male nor female: sexual organs are lacking'.⁵⁸

Most interesting is what is said in regard to the Dyad. It is the other entity, not a unit (*unitas*) such as the Monad, but a division (*divisio*). A few sentences earlier in *conf.* 4,24, Augustine has remarked that in virtue (*uirtus*) he loved the peace and noted the unity (*unitas*), but in vice (*uitiositas*) hated the discord and noticed a kind of division (*diuisio*). Here he tells in more

55 E.g. Coptic Manichaean *Psalm-Book* (ed. Allberry), 9ff.; *Kephalaia* (ed. and transl. by H.J. Polotsky-A. Böhlig-W.-P. Funk, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1940–2018), 3 ff.; specifically on its inner division and divisiveness e.g. *Kephalaia* 128,5–8.

56 Macrobius, *Somnium Scipionis* 1,6,7 (ed. & transl. W.H. Stahl, New York: Columbia University Press 1990): 'unum autem, quod Monas, id est unitas, dicitur, et mas idem et femina est'. Cf. e.g. the Greek *arsenothēlon* in other sources on Pythagorean opinions.

57 Cf. e.g. Theodore bar Kōnai's Syriac quotes from Mani's own writings in his *Liber scholiorum* XI (ed. Scher, *cscs* 66, 313–314), in the translation of J.C. Reeves (*Prolegomena to a History of Islamicate Manichaeism*, Sheffield-Bristol: Equinox 2011, 147): 'He says that the Father of Greatness evoked the Mother of Life, and the Mother of Life evoked the Primal Man, and the Primal Man evoked his five sons ...'. Etc.

58 See the translated quote from Biruni in Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 110.

detail what this *uitiositas* causing *diuisio* meant to him: it is 'anger in criminal acts, lust in shameful deeds'. In Augustine's defining understanding, criminal acts (*facinores*; *facinora*) are acts against the life or property of other people; shameful deeds (*flagitia*) the acts against the nature and morals of men. For example, the famous pear theft is described in *conf.* 6,¹² as being a crime (*facinus*);⁵⁹ *flagitia* are indicated, for example, in the well-known opening sentence of *conf.* 3: 'Veni Carthaginem, et circumstrepebat me undique sartago *flagitiosorum* amorum'.⁶⁰ About the same time as he wrote his *Confessiones*, Augustine makes the distinction between the two kinds of acts very clear in *De doctrina christiana*: 'Quod autem agit indomita cupiditas ad corrumpendum animum et corpus suum, *flagitium* vocatur; quod autem agit ut alteri noceat, *facinus* dicitur: But what unsubdued lust does towards corrupting one's own soul and body, is called *vice*; but what it does to injure another is called *crime*'.⁶¹ As in several of Augustine's other works, in classical Latin the two terms are also often linked, for instance in his favourite authors such as Cicero and Salustius.⁶²

7 Augustine's Manichaean Dyad: Anger and Lust

But what about the statement of Augustine that he sees the Dyad in anger or wrath (*ira*) and in lust (*libido*)? Anger is leading to crimes of violence, lust to sins of passion. I have not been able to find this combination as emphatically stated like some sort of technical terms in the classical sources, nor in the biblical ones.

However, one finds the distinctive combination of 'anger'/'wrath' and 'lust' in several Manichaean sources, always as typical features of the kingdom of darkness and the behaviour of the persons under its influence. Concerning the self-divided realm of darkness, it reads in the Coptic *Kephalaia* that from this kingdom through the 'conduits' (*lihme*), the demonic waste is poured down and exerts its influence on human behaviour:

59 Cf. *conf.* 6,11.

60 Elsewhere in his immense oeuvre, Augustine sometimes distinguishes these *flagitia* in acts *contra naturam* and acts *contra mores hominum*. For the argument that the *flagitia* of *conf.* 3,1 are likely to have been of a homoerotic character, see ch. 10: 'Sin and Concupiscence in Augustine's *Confessions*'.

61 *Doctr. chr.* 3,16 (CCL 32,87).

62 See e.g. O'Donnell, *Augustine*, *Confessions*, 11: *Commentary on Books 1-7*, 191.

The waste too, and the **lust** (*epithymía*) and the evil-doing and the **anger** (*blke*) that will be greater in the powers of heaven, shall be poured to the ground through their various conduits (*lihme*). They shall be discharged upon mankind and the other remaining animals. When what is heavenly will wash the waste and the stench and the poison down on the creations of the flesh below, in their turn the creations shall be greater in **lust** (*epithymía*) and **anger** (*blke*) and evil doing against each other through the action of their fathers (i.e., the evil archons) who are on high.⁶³

This passage speaks of all 'creatures' (thus including humankind), but in many other places the 'anger' and 'lust' (whether or not associated with a just mentioned vice such as *kakía*, evil doing) only refer to the behaviour of humans. Elsewhere in the *Kephalaia*, for example, it reads in a sort of self-reflection of the Manichaean believer on his inner struggle between good and bad:

There are also times when I shall be troubled. My doctrines are confused. Gloom increases with them, and grief and **anger** (*blke*) and envy and **lust** (*epithymía*). I am troubled, struggling with all my might that I would subdue them

Understand this: The soul that assumes the body when the Light Mind will come to it, shall be purified by the power of wisdom and obedience, and it is cleansed and made a new man.⁶⁴ There is no trouble in (the soul), nor confusion nor disturbance. However, when a disturbance will rise for him and he will be troubled, this disturbance shall go into him in ..., first through his birth-signs and his difficult stars that ... they turn over him and stir him and trouble him with **lust** (*epithymía*) and **anger** (*blke*) and depression and grief, as he wills. Also, as he wills, the powers of heaven shall trouble him through their roots,⁶⁵ to which he is attached. (...) Again, trouble and confusion and **anger** (*blke*) will increase in him, and **lust** (*epithymía*) multiplies upon him together with depression and grief; because of the nourishment of the bread he has eaten and the water he has drunk, which are full of bothersome parts, a vengeful counsel (*enthymèsis*). They shall enter his body, mixed in with these foods, even become joined in with the wicked parts of the body; and the sin (*nabe*) which is in it [sc.

63 *Kephalaia* 121,30–31.

64 Cf. Paul and Pauline theology in e.g. Rom. 6–7; Eph. 4,22–23; cf. 2 Cor. 4,16; Col. 3,9.

65 In all likelihood, the 'roots' are closely related to the 'conduits' (*lihme*) in the previous quotation. Cf. e.g. A. Böhlig, *Die Gnosis*, III, *Der Manichäismus*, Zürich-München: Artemis Verlag 1980, 332 n. 72.

the body] changes into **anger** (*blke*) and **lust** (*epithymía*) and depression and grief, these wicked thoughts of the body.⁶⁶

I will come back to some interesting expressions in this long passage shortly. First, however, I mention a few other passages in which anger/wrath and lust/(sexual) desire form a remarkable pair. In the Coptic Manichaean Psalms, it runs:

He whom grief has killed, he on whom **anger** (*blke*) has leapt:
He for whom **lust** (*hèdoné*) has soiled the whiteness of his clothes:⁶⁷

Elsewhere in the same *Psalms of the Bêma*:

He that is **angry** (*boolk*), sins; he that causes **wrath** (*blke*) is a murderer⁶⁸

The **wanton** (or **wantonness**: *dzrdzir*) ... of wickedness, do thou rule
over them: the ... and that of foul **lust** (*hèdoné*);
..... and do thou
..... **wrath** (*blke*) and envy and sadness;⁶⁹

In the *Psalmoi Sarakōtōn* ('Psalms of the Wanderers'), Jesus is speaking to the soul:

Give not room to wrath (<i>blke</i>).	My soul, and [thou shalt live].
Subdue desire (<i>epithymía</i>).	My soul, and [thou shalt live]. ⁷⁰

Lust (often with a sexual connotation) and desire (*idem*) are time and again mentioned in other texts. I quote only a few. In a 'Psalm to Jesus' it runs:

Come, my Saviour Jesus, do not forsake me.
Jesus, thee have I loved, I have given my soul ...
armour; I have not given it rather to the foul **lusts** (*hèdoné*)
of the world. Jesus, do not forsake me.⁷¹

66 *Kephalaia* 214,4–5 and 215,1–22 (improved).

67 *Psalm-Book* 45,17–18.

68 *Psalm-Book* 39,25.

69 *Psalm-Book* 7,26–28.

70 *Psalm-Book* 183,5–6.

71 *Psalm-Book* 51,4–7.

In some other psalms of the same collection:

The **lust** (*hèdoné*) of the sweetness that is bitter I have not tasted ..
... the **fire** (*sete*) of eating and drinking, I have not suffered them to [lord
it over me.

The gifts of Matter (*hylè*) I have cast away: thy sweet
yoke I have received in purity.⁷²

The bitter darts of **lust** (*hèdoné*), the murderers of souls,
thou hast not tasted, thou, o holy Son
undefiled.⁷³

They pass their whole life, given over to eating and drinking
and **lust** (*hèdoné*)⁷⁴

Elsewhere in the *Psalmoi Sarakōtōn*, the lust (*hèdoné*) and desire (*epithymía*)
are reported to be related to or even identical with the 'fire' (*sete*) of the body:

Its (i.e., the body's) **fire** (*sete*), its **lust** (*hèdoné*), they trick me daily.⁷⁵

He that conquers the **fire** (*sete*) shall be the sun by day; he that conquers
desire (*epithymía*) shall be the moon by night.

The sun and the moon in the sky, they conquer these two, the heat
and the cold, the summer and the winter.

The holy Church will conquer them also, the **fire** (*sete*) and
the **lust** (*hèdoné*), the lion-faced dragon.⁷⁶

8 Anger, Lust and the Nourishment

I notice that in these texts anger and lust are not only connected with the body
(which according to the Manichaeans consists of evil substance), but that some
texts also explicitly associate these vices with the nourishment that enters the
body. A just quoted Psalm to Jesus speaks of 'the fire of eating and drinking'

⁷² *Psalm-Book* 55,27–31.

⁷³ *Psalm-Book* 64,25–27.

⁷⁴ *Psalm-Book* 81,31–82,1.

⁷⁵ *Psalm-Book* 152,17.

⁷⁶ *Psalm-Book* 156,9–22.

in direct combination with lust; another Psalm also links 'eating and drinking' to 'lust'; the long quotation from the *Kephalaia* tells that anger and lust in the believer are caused because of 'the bread he has eaten and the water he has drunk, which are full of bothersome parts, a vengeful counsel (*enthymèsis*):'⁷⁷ Anger and lust, so this *Kephalaion* 86 continues, 'even become joined in with the wicked parts of the body and the sin (*nabe*)⁷⁸ that is in the body changes⁷⁹ into anger (*blke*) and lust (*epithymía*) ...'. Lust is also often associated with fire (*tsete mn thèdoné*): both are elements of darkness; both can rule in the body when it is not ruled by the Light Mind.

Reading Augustine's report on *De pulchro et apto* in light of these texts, one gets the impression that its part dealing with the Dyad has been a kind of philosophical-ethical treatise on human behaviour: 'anger in criminal acts, lust in shameful deeds'. These 'anger'/'wrath' (*ira*) and 'lust' (*libido*) seem to find their striking equivalents in the 'anger'/'wrath' (*blke*) and 'lust' (*epithymía*) of the Coptic Manichaean texts.

It is quite possible that Augustine has also addressed the deeper causes of anger and lust in *De pulchro et apto*; thus, he may also have discussed how nourishment relates to them.

9 Once Again: a Fully Manichaean Treatise

In addition to the indications mentioned above, I would like to point out a number of other Manichaean characteristics for *De pulchro et apto*.

At the end of *conf.* 4,24, Augustine reports: 'For I did not know, nor had I learnt that evil is not a substance, nor that our mind is not the supreme and unchangeable good'. Both notions (evil a substance; our *mens* part of the supreme and unchangeable Good, i.e., God) are fully Manichaean.

In *conf.* 4,25 Augustine tells that once he did not know that his 'reasoning mind' (*mens rationalis*) 'needs to be enlightened (*inlustrandam esse*) by light from outside itself, in order to participate in the truth, because it is not itself the

77 *Kephalaia* 215,17–18. In many Coptic and other Manichaean texts, this *enthymèsis* is specifically mentioned as 'the *enthymèsis of death*' and closely associated with Āz, the female demon preminent representative of (and often identical with) evil matter.

78 More or less equivalent to Āz and reminiscent of the Jewish rabbinical concept of יצר הרע (*yešer hara'*). Cf. e.g. my 'Was Julian Right? A Re-Evaluation of Augustine's and Mani's Doctrines of Sexual Concupiscence and the Transmission of Sin', now in *Mani and Augustine* (n. 34), 384–410.

79 Or: 'exceeds'.

nature of truth'.⁸⁰ Apart from the obviously Manichaean principle of the consubstantiality of God and the soul or mind, Augustine as a Manichaean also certainly knew about the principle of the *illuminatio* or *illustratio*: in innumerable texts Mani is described as the *phōstér*, the one who brings the illumination, i.e., the *gnosis*.⁸¹ Augustine himself relates that those who heard the readings from Mani's *Epistula fundamenti* were called 'inluminati';⁸² also, that in Mani's (?) epistle to his 'daughter' Menoch he wishes that 'God may enlighten (*illustret*)' her mind.⁸³

The same Manichaean principle of the consubstantiality of God and the soul or mind is rejected in *conf.* 4,26; here Augustine also repeats that, in his Manichaean arrogance, he imagined *corporeal* shapes (*formas corporeas*) of the divine spiritual world.⁸⁴

All this indicates that his mindset in *De pulchro et apto* still was entirely Manichaean, as is also confirmed in the statement that in his wandering he 'wandered on and on into things which have no existence either in You or in me or in the body' because they were 'corporeal *fictions*'.⁸⁵

In *conf.* 4,27 it sounds again that he was concerned with 'corporeal'⁸⁶ fictions' (*corporalia figmenta*) in his youth work when he was reflecting on 'pulchrum' and 'aptum'.⁸⁷

10 A Strikingly 'Manichaean' Finale?

The last part of the separate section Augustine devotes to *De pulchro et apto* deserves some special attention. One gets the impression that, in *conf.* 4,27, the

80 *Conf.* 4,25 (CCL 27,53): '... nesciente alio lumine illam inlustrandam esse, ut sit particeps ueritatis, quia non est ipsa natura ueritatis ...'.

81 For instance, time and again it runs in the *Kephalaia*: 'Once again the enlightener (*phōstér*) speaks: ...'.

82 *C. ep. Man.* 5,6 (CSEL 25,197): 'ipa [sc. epistula] enim nobis illo tempore miseris quando lecta est, inluminati dicebamus a uobis'.

83 *C. Iul. op. imp.* 3,172 (CSEL 85,473): '... ipseque [sc. uerus deus] tuam mentem illustret ...'.

84 *Conf.* 4,26 (CCL 27,53): 'Sed ego conabar ad te et repellebar abs te, ut saperem mortem, quoniam superbis resistis. Quid autem superbius, quam ut assererem mira dementia me id esse naturaliter, quod tu es? (...) et resistebas uentosae ceruici meae et imaginabar formas corporeas ...'.

85 *Ibidem*: '... et ambulando ambulabam in ea, quae non sunt neque in te neque in me neque in corpore neque mihi creabantur a ueritate tua, sed a mea uanitate fingeantur ex corpore ...'.

86 I.e., once again: material, physical as opposed to spiritual.

87 *Conf.* 4,27 (CCL 27,53–54): '... cum illa uolumina scripsi, uoluens apud me corporalia figmenta ...'.

man who has in the meantime become a Nicene-Catholic bishop once again opens the registers of his language virtuosity in striking images and expressions particularly intended for his (ex-)Manichaean readers.⁸⁸ Let us first look at the passage in its entirety:

Et eram aetate annorum fortasse uiginti sex aut septem, cum illa uolumina scripsi, uoluens apud me corporalia figmenta obstreperantia cordis mei auribus, quas intendebar, dulcis ueritas, in interiorem melodiam tuam, cogitans de pulchro et apto et stare cupiens et audire te et gaudio gaudere propter uocem sponsi, et non poteram, quia uocibus erroris mei rapiebar foras et pondere superbiae meae in ima decidebam. Non enim dabas auditui meo gaudium et laetitiam, aut exultabant ossa, quae humiliata non erant.⁸⁹

And I was perhaps twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age when I wrote those volumes, turning over in myself corporeal fictions that clamoured to the ears of my heart. These I directed, o sweet Truth, to your interior melody, reflecting on the beautiful and the harmonious and longing to stay and hear You and to rejoice with joy at the voice of the Bridegroom (John 3:29), and I could not; for by the voices of my own errors I was snatched away to external things, and by the weight of my own pride I tumbled into the depths. For You did not grant joy and gladness to my hearing, nor did my bones exult which were not humbled (Ps. 50:10).

The (two or three) *libri* from the beginning (*conf.* 3,20) are here referred to as *uolumina*: they may have been (fairly) extensive works. The words '*uoluens apud me*' are closely related to '*animo uersabam*' in *conf.* 3,23; they reinforce the impression that the literary form of the work was a dialogical *monologue*. The question whether '*uoluens*' subtly indicates that the books were written on scrolls and did not have the 'modern' form of a codex may remain open here.⁹⁰ As noted earlier, the expression '*corporalia figmenta*' refers to the Manichaean *phantasmata* and the adjective '*corporalia*' indicates its absolute imperfectness in comparison to '*spiritualia*'. But why does Augustine speak of 'the ears of my heart'? The phrase '*aures cordis mei*' also occurs in *conf.* 1,5

88 As this is the case in my opinion in e.g. *conf.* 3,10; cf. 'Augustine's Criticism of Manichaeism: The Case of *Confessions* 3,10' (above, n. 34).

89 *Conf.* 4,27 (CCL 27,53–54).

90 Cf. e.g. both Faustus and Ambrose still reading '*uolumina*' (*conf.* 5,11 and 6,3), but '*codices*' for the younger Alypius (*conf.* 6,16) and Augustine (e.g. *conf.* 6,18; 8,13,29,30).

and reminds of Manichaeans' parlance: they liked to mention parts of the body⁹¹ while texts such as their Coptic *Psalmbook* are full of metaphors like 'the eyes of my heart';⁹² 'the eyes of my soul';⁹³ the 'eye of my soul';⁹⁴ 'the eye of plenty';⁹⁵ 'the eye of malice';⁹⁶ or 'these hands of pity'⁹⁷ and 'the ears of the (unhearing) soul'.⁹⁸ I already mentioned the special occurrence of metaphors in the grammatical form of the appositional genitive;⁹⁹ now I add that many of them pertain to body parts. One may wonder whether Augustine in many such telling metaphors in his *Confessiones*¹⁰⁰ has not been influenced by Manichaean poetry. In any case, the striking idiom 'the ears of my heart' here in *conf.* 4,27 makes this impression.

Yet there seems to be more to be noted in our passage. God is addressed as 'o sweet Truth'. As Augustine specifically reports in *conf.* 3,10 and as many Manichaean texts confirm, the Manichaeans claimed to make known 'the truth';¹⁰¹ moreover, they described God as 'the Father of Truth' and also Christ as, for instance, 'the Right Hand of Truth'.¹⁰² Of course, many biblical texts for such speaking of '(the) truth' may be invoked, but perhaps nowhere else in Augustine's world it was more common than among the Manichaeans. The same seems to apply to 'sweet': it is well known from a biblical text such as Ps. 33 (34):9 which resounds in 1Pet. 2:3, but conceivably nowhere else in religious speech in Augustine's environment will it have been heard as often and as articulated as among the Manichaeans. From the almost innumerable examples in their texts which have come down to us so far, I quote only three instances, i.e., two from 'Psalms to Jesus' and the refrain of one of the *Psalmoi Sarakōtōn*:

91 Cf. e.g. T. Säve-Söderbergh, *Studies in the Coptic Manichaean Psalm-Book*, Uppsala etc.: Almqvist & Wiksells 1949, 98–105 on 'the enumerations of the senses and limbs'; Säve-Söderbergh draws particular attention to Mandaean parallels.

92 *Psalm-Book* 89,6.

93 *Psalm-Book* 86,24.

94 *Psalm-Book* 101,23.

95 *Psalm-Book* 163,10.

96 *Psalm-Book* 171,20.

97 *Psalm-Book* 16,31–32.

98 *Psalm-Book* 194,26.

99 Above, p. 69 and nn. 28–30.

100 See, apart from the instances mentioned on pp. 69–70, e.g. '*oculus carnis mei*' in *conf.* 3,11; '*manus linguae meae*' in *conf.* 5,1; '*manus cordis*' and '*facies recordationis meae*' in *conf.* 10,12.

101 Cf. e.g. *Psalm-Book* 14,14; 43,8; etc.; *Kephalaia* 5,31–32; 7,5; etc.

102 Cf. 'Manichaean Imagery of Christ as God's Hand' (2018), now in *Mani and Augustine* (n. 34), 89–110.

In a **sweet** voice he [my Saviour] answered me saying, O blessed and
 righteous (*dikaïos*)
 man, come forth, be not afraid,
 I am thy guide in every place.¹⁰³

The joy, my Lord, of thy **sweet** cry has made me forget
 life (*bíos*); the **sweetness** of thy voice has made me remember my city
 (*pólis*).¹⁰⁴

Taste and know that the Lord is **sweet** (*halc*).
 Christ is the word or Truth (*mèe*): he that hears it shall live.¹⁰⁵

As a next case in point, I may mention Augustine's speaking of

... et stare cupiens et audire te et gaudio gaudere propter vocem
 sponsi, et non poteram, quia vocibus erroris mei rapiebar foras et pon-
 dere superbiae meae in ima decidebam.

Here (with some modification)¹⁰⁶ a large part of Joh. 3:29 is quoted: '*Qui habet sponsam, sponsus est: amicus autem sponsi, qui stat, et audit eum, gaudio gaudet propter vocem sponsi. Hoc ergo gaudium meum impletum est*'. The same Bible text plays a role in *conf.* 11,10¹⁰⁷ and *conf.* 13,14.¹⁰⁸ In all these cases, a strong mystical feature in Augustine's *Confessiones* becomes apparent. But why is here—and in fact quite unexpected—the image of the Bridegroom evoked and is the

103 *Psalm-Book* 50,18–20.

104 *Psalm-Book* 53,27–28.

105 *Psalm-Book* 158,18–19. Cf. e.g. the commentary by A. Villey, *Psaumes des errants. Écrits manichéennes du Fayyūm*, Paris: Cerf 1994, 327–329.

106 Cf. L. Verheijen's note '**et gaudio ... sponsi* Ioh. 3, 29' in *CCL* 27,54, his asterisk meaning that 'Les scribes n'ont pas commis ici une fausse transcription de leur modèle, mais adapté le texte des *Confessions* à leur propre Psautier' (*CCL* 27, LXXXI). In my quote here (and in the two next notes) I follow as closely as possible M. Skutella in the latest edition by H. Jürgens and W. Schaub: *S. Avrelīi Avgvstīni Confessionvm libri XIII*, Stuttgart-Leipzig: Teubner 1996, 73, although in my view also 'stare' and 'audire' are reminiscent of Joh. 3:29.

107 *Conf.* 11,10: 'quia et per creaturam mutabilem cum admonemur, ad veritatem stabilem ducimur, ubi vere discimus, cum stamus et audimus eum et gaudio gaudemus propter vocem sponsi, reddentes nos, unde sumus'.

108 *Conf.* 13,14: 'illi enim suspirat sponsi amicus, habens iam spiritus primitias penes eum, sed adhuc in semet ipso ingemescens, adoptionem expectans, redemptionem corporis sui. illi suspirat—membrum est enim sponsae—et illi zelat—amicus est enim sponsi—illi zelat, non sibi ...'.

emphasis on his voice? The Manichaean sources are full of statements about the Bridegroom, his calling voice, and the believer who waits to hear this voice and to rejoice. I quote only a very few of these texts:

Light your lamps (*lampás*) and
and **keep watch** on the day of the Bêma for the **Bridegroom**
of joy (...) ¹⁰⁹

Let me be worthy of thy **bridechambers** [that are full
of] Light.
Jesus Christ, receive me into thy **bridechambers**, [thou my]
Saviour. (...)
Purify me, my **bridegroom**, o Saviour, with thy waters
..... that are full of grace (*cháris*). (...)
..... shines like the sun, I have lighted it, o
bridegroom, with the excellent oil of purity ..
..... maiden, I **making music** (*psállein*) unto thee, my Saviour ... (...)
..... Christ, take me into thy **bridechambers**.
..... grace (*cháris*) and the garlands of victory. Lo,
..... **joy**, as they **make music** (*psállein*) with them; let me **rejoice**
in all the **bridechambers**, and do thou give me the crown of
the holy ones. ¹¹⁰

O first-born [take me in unto thee.]
I have become a holy **bride** in the **bridechambers**
of Light that are at rest, I have received the gifts of the victory. ¹¹¹

Take me in to thy **bridechambers** that I may **chant** with
them that **sing** to thee. Christ [guide me: my Saviour, do not forget
me.] ¹¹²

Lo, the] wise virgins, they do put oil into their lamps.
We weave [a royal garland and give it to all the
holy ones.]

¹⁰⁹ *Psalm-Book* 37,30–33 (= *Psalm of the Bêma* 237).

¹¹⁰ *Psalm-Book* 79,17–80,22 (= *Psalm to Jesus* 263).

¹¹¹ *Psalm-Book* 81,12–14 (= *Psalm to Jesus* 264).

¹¹² *Psalm-Book* 117,29–30 (= *Psalm to Christ*).

Lo, the **Bridegroom** has come: where is the **Bride** who is like
 him? We weave.
 The **Bride** is the Church, the **Bridegroom** is the Mind (*nous*)
 of Light. We weave.
 The **Bride** is the soul, the **Bridegroom** is Jesus.
 My brethren, let us purify ourselves from all pollutions,
 for (*gár*) [we know not] the hour when the **Bridegroom** shall **sum-**
mon us.¹¹³

The image of the Bridegroom is often inspired by Mt. 25 and so it appears countless times in Manichaean texts.¹¹⁴ But the influence of a passage such as Mt. 25:1–13 (perhaps via Tatian's *Diatessaron*?) is not always evident and it is also often the Father (and not Jesus or Christ) who is invoked as the Bridegroom.¹¹⁵ What may be underlined is that—in addition to the 'Psalms to Jesus' and the 'Psalms of the Wanderers'—the image is also prominent in the 'Psalms of the Bêma'. Was it perhaps during the annual Bêma festival—attended and celebrated by all 'Hearers' and thus also by *auditor* Augustine¹¹⁶—that he was introduced to these and similar songs about the Bridegroom? It will be no coincidence that now, in the description of his Manichaean *De pulchro et apto*, he uses—for the first time in the *Confessiones* and quite unexpectedly—the orthodox-Christian (and solely biblical) image of the Bridegroom as an essential reminiscence of his first writing. In all likelihood, it contained mystical tones: in actual fact it was 'a first attempt at an intellectual ascent to God',¹¹⁷ as particularly expressed at the beginning of *conf.* 4,26:

113 *Psalm-Book* 154,1–9 (= *Psalmoi Sarakôtôn*).

114 It is also present in the newly edited Dublin *Kephalaia*: see *The Chapters of the Wisdom of My Lord Mani*, Part III: *Pages 343–442 (Chapters 321–347)*. Edited and translated by I. Gardner, J. BeDuhn and P.C. Dilley (*NHMS* 92), Leiden-Boston: Brill 2018, 438, with right reference not only to Mt. 25:1 ff. but also to Ev.Thom. log. 75.

115 E.g. *Psalms of Heracleides, Psalm-Book* (ed. Allberry) 199,1–2.14–15.23–24:

'The Land of] Light, the house of the **Father**, the **bridechamber** (*numphôn*)
 of all the Aeons. Tell the news.'

'I [the *presbeutês*] was sent, the **Father** rejoicing, he being in the **bridechamber**
 (*numphôn*) of
 the Land of Light, that I might tell the news.'

'I was sent, the **bridechamber** (*numphôn*) **rejoicing**, the Land of Light,
 the house of the **Father**. Lo, this is the new of the skies.'

116 E.g. c. *ep. Man.* 8,9 (*CSEL* 25,203): 'hoc enim nobis erat in illa bematis celebritate gratissimum, quod pro pascha frequentabatur, quoniam uehementius desiderabamus illum diem festum subtracto alio, qui solebat esse dulcissimus'.

117 O'Donnell, *Augustine*, *Confessions*, II: *Commentary on Books 1–7*, 247. Cf. e.g. *conf.* 4,26 (quoted above, n. 84).

Sed ego conabar ad te et repellebar abs te, ut saperem mortem, quoniam superbis resistis.¹¹⁸

But I tried to reach You and was pushed back by You to taste death, for You resist the proud.

Finally, Augustine once again emphasizes in *conf.* 4,27 that his work was thoroughly Manichaean: 'by the voices of my own errors I was snatched away to external (i.e., corporeal, physical) things, and by the weight of my own pride (*superbia*) I tumbled into the depths (*ima*)'. 'Pride', 'being pride' and 'the proud' are often keywords in the *Confessiones* that indicate the Manichaeans and their behaviour;¹¹⁹ *ima* (pl., the depths) here resounds '*in profundum*' of *conf.* 4,20 and seems to indicate also here the Manichaeans and their teachings.

11 Once Again: 'Pulchrum' and 'Aptum'; 'Decus' and 'Species'; 'Monas' and 'Dyas'

In my explanation so far, I deliberately left a number of issues open. After the Manichaean content, purpose and some characteristics of Augustine's *De pulchro et apto* have been delineated, some remaining subjects may receive a proper discussion from within a now more clearly established Manichaean frame of reference.

As regards 'aptum', most has been said already in §3. Although in the first writing of a young rhetor one certainly should not exclude other parallels and influences,¹²⁰ I hold that in young Augustine's case the most essential impetus came from Manichaean sources. Based on this finding, I conclude the best translation of 'aptum' is 'harmony'.

Essentially, the same can be said about 'pulchrum'. Undoubtedly it has been a designation of God and the divine world since Plato, and without a doubt this designation had an essential place in Neoplatonism¹²¹ and many popular philo-

¹¹⁸ *Conf.* 4,26 (CCL 27,53–54).

¹¹⁹ Apart from the just given quote from *conf.* 4,26 (based on 1 Pet. 5:5 and Jas. 4:6), cf. e.g. *conf.* 3,10.

¹²⁰ Such as especially those from rhetorical-philosophical works; cf. e.g. Fontanier, 'Sur le traité d'Augustin' (n. 2).

¹²¹ Of course, I think above all of Plotinus' treatise 'On Beauty' (*Enn.* 1,6) which—as is generally assumed—was well known to Augustine.

sophical currents. And albeit that in Augustine's reflection on his first writing Neoplatonic views resound,¹²² the work was written long before his Milanese discovery of Plotinus and (in all likelihood) Porphyry. Thus, for his speaking of God and the divine world as being 'Beauty' and 'beautiful', the parallels from the Manichaeon sources are most compelling. In his aforementioned article, Katô has reproduced a whole range of passages from the (then known) Manichaeon writings from Medinet Madi. Perhaps the nearly complete lack of clarifying context in his article caused his quotations not to convince everyone. They need not all be repeated here, nor supplemented from countless other Manichaeon sources. I only mention a few texts, principally from the Manichaeon *Psalmbook* and especially from the psalm genres most quoted before:

Let us not hide our sickness from him [the great Physician, i.e., Mani]
and leave the cancer in our members (*mélôs*),
the **fair** (*saïë*) and mighty image (*eikôn*) of the New Man, so that it
destroys it.¹²³

Draw now the veil (*ouèlon*) of thy secrets until I see
the **beauty** (*saïë*) of the joyous Image (*eikôn*) of my Mother, the
holy Maiden, who will ferry me until she brings me to my city
(*pólis*).¹²⁴

Who has changed for thee
thy **fair** (*houten*) **beauty** (*mntsaïë*)?¹²⁵

'I will [give] my body (*sōma*) to death for thy body (*sōma*) and give
my **fair** (*houten*) **beauty** (*saïë*) for thy **beauty** (*saïë*).'¹²⁶

Fair (*nece-*) is the ship, the sailor being aboard it: **fair** (*nece-*) is the
Church (*ekklèsía*), the Mind (*nous*) steering it.

Fair (*nece-*) is the dove that has found a holy pool: Jesus is
..... in the heart of his faithful (*pistós*).¹²⁷

122 E.g. *conf.* 4,24 (CCL 27,53): 'Non enim noueram neque didiceram nec ullam substantiam malum esse nec ipsam mentem nostram summum atque incommutabile bonum'.

123 *Psalm-Book* 46,16–17 (= *Psalm of the Bema* 241).

124 *Psalm-Book* 84,30–32 (= *Psalm to Jesus* 267).

125 *Psalm-Book* 146,45–46 (= *Psalmoi Sarakôtôn*).

126 *Psalm-Book* 148,29,30 (= *Psalmoi Sarakôtôn*).

127 *Psalm-Book* 161,5–8 (= *Psalmoi Sarakôtôn*).

Play with thy lute (*kithára*), play with thy lute (*kithára*); that we may play to these pious ones.

God, God, God, **fair** (*nece-*) is God, God, God,

God, my God, God.

Jesus, the Maiden (*parthénos*), the Mind (*nous*),—**fair** (*necō≈*) are they to love within: the Father, the Son, the holy Spirit,—**fair** (*necō≈*) are they to look at without.

My brethren, let us make festival and sing to our Saviour that has rescued us from the deceit (*apátè*).

Let us therefore get ourselves a heart that tires not of singing (...)¹²⁸

Thou art a mighty Light: Jesus, enlighten me.

First-born of the Father.

Beauty (*saie*) of the **fair**

(*houten*) One.¹²⁹

Fair (*nece-*) God, he singing hymns (*hymneúein*).

Fair (*nece-*) is an Intelligence (*nous*) collected if it has received the love (*agápè*) of God. **Fair** (*nece-*).

Fair (*nece-*) is a Reason of Light which Faith has reached.

Fair (*nece-*) is a perfect Thought which Perfection ...

Fair (*nece-*) is a good Counsel that has given place to endurance (*hypomoné*).

Fair (*nece-*) is a blessed Intention that has been flavoured with Wisdom (*sophía*). **Fair** (*nece-*).

Fair (*nece-*) is a holy soul that has taken unto her the holy Spirit.

Fair (*nece-*) are the five virgins in whose lamps (*lampás*) oil was found. **Fair** (*nece-*).

Fair (*nece-*) is the ship laden with treasure (*chrèma*), the sailor being aboard it. **Fair** (*nece-*).

Fair (*nece-*) are the birds ascending before them. [**Fair** (*nece-*).]

¹²⁸ *Psalm-Book* 164,9–18 (= *Psalmoi Sarakōtōn*).

¹²⁹ *Psalm-Book* 166,23–24.32 (= *Psalmoi Sarakōtōn*). It may be remarked that, in the last case, E.B. Smagina ('Some Word with Unknown Meaning in Coptic Manichaean Texts', *Enchoria* 17 (1990) 111–122 [120–121]) reads *mñthouten* ('of the image') instead of *mpihouten* ('of the fair one').

Fair (*nece*-) are the sheep gathered, their
 Fair (*nece*-) are we also together
 Though we see not the Saviour (*Sôtèr*) let us worship his
 May he abide with us and we abide with him
 from everlasting to everlasting.
 Glory and honour to Jesus, the King of the holy ones. (...) ¹³⁰

These quotations from the 'Psalms to Jesus', the 'Bêma Psalms' and—in particular—the 'Psalms of the Wanderers' may suffice to demonstrate how often Manichaean texts spoke about God and the divine world in terms of 'beauty' and 'beautiful'. Besides, not only in these texts which Augustine may have known in some Latin form,¹³¹ but also in a writing by Mani himself such as the *Thesaurus* we find these terms in abundance.¹³²

Does this mean, then, that Augustine's *De pulchro et apto* was 'a treatise of aesthetics'? Peter Brown calls it that in his famous biography¹³³ and—as far as I can see—this is a still prevailing general opinion, another one being that it is a 'philosophical' writing.¹³⁴ I venture to challenge this scholarly consensus, however; or at least to make some modifying comments. Indeed, Augustine starts the account of his first writing with the questions: 'Do we love anything but the beautiful? What, then, is a beautiful object? And what is beauty?' However, this is in a context where is first said: 'I loved these beautiful things of lower degree, and I was going down into the depth'; and immediately after-

¹³⁰ *Psalm-Book* 174,11–31 (= *Psalmoi Sarakôtôn*).

¹³¹ Cf. e.g. *conf.* 3,14 (CCL 27,34): '... et cantabam carmina ...'; sc. Manichaean songs in Latin; *conf.* 5,11 (CCL 27,62) on Faustus: 'Et quia legerat aliquas Tullianas orationes et paucissimos Senecae libros et nonnulla poetarum et suae sectae si qua uolumina latine atque compositae conscripta erant ...'; *conf.* 5,12 (CCL 27,63): 'Libri quippe eorum [sc. of the Manichaeans] pleni sunt longissimis fabulis de caelo et de sideribus et sole et luna: quae mihi eum, quod utique cupiebam, conlatis numerorum rationibus, quas alibi ego legeram, utrum potius ita essent, ut *Manichaei libris* continebantur ...'; 5,13 (*ibidem*): 'Refracto itaque studio, quod intenderam in *Manichaei litteras* ...'; etc. One may also compare, for instance, c. *Sec.* 3 (CSEL 25,909): '... innumerabilis locis de *libris Manichaei* recitabo ...' and *mor.* 2, 25 (CSEL 90,110): 'Non hoc sonant *libri Manichaei* ...'. All these sources must have been available to Augustine and others in *Latin* translation.

¹³² Cf. the long quotation from its seventh book in Augustine's *nat. b.* 44 (CSEL 25,881–884): 'tunc beatus ille pater, qui *lucidas* naues habet diuersoria (...) itaque inuisibili suo nutu illas suas uirtutes, quae in *clarissima* hac naui habentur ...'; etc.

¹³³ P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo. A Biography. A New Edition with an Epilogue*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 2000, 41 and 56.

¹³⁴ Cf. e.g. P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, Paris: De Boccard 1950¹, 60: '... son premier essai philosophique'.

wards: 'And I took notice (litt.: I turned my mind [to it]: *adimaduertebam*) and saw that in bodies (i.e., in material objects) there was ...' (*conf.* 3,20). In other words, the emphasis here is on the fact that Augustine (being a Manichaeon and so descending 'into the depth') focuses only on 'corporeal' objects. This is not about 'high' aesthetics, but about a Manichaeon who considers with his friends that they 'love nothing but the beautiful', i.e., 'those things' (*rebus*) in which the Light element (sc. God) 'attracts' (*allicit*) them and 'wins over' (*con-ciliat*) to love them (*amamus*; cf. the previous *amabam*). Earlier I spoke of the likely 'alimentary' background of *De pulchro et apto*; here one may see another confirmation of this conjecture in the essential motive for his writing, namely the reflection on the observation of Light elements (i.e., in essence: God) in 'corporeal' objects.

About these objects, it then reads: 'For unless there were *decus* and *species* in them, they would in no way move us towards them.' 'Decus' has a whole range of meanings in the *Confessiones* (and also elsewhere in Augustine's works); to name just a few: it may denote 'glory', 'splendour' or 'grace';¹³⁵ but also translations such as 'beautiful' and 'fair' seem appropriate.¹³⁶ In all of these instances there is a certain overlap with 'species' and when both words occur together, synonyms in the translation will be appropriate. The very first meaning of 'species' (cf. *specere*: to look at, behold, see) is: a 'view', a 'look'; hence it also denotes: 'form', 'appearance', 'beautiful form', 'beauty'. In Augustine's *Confessiones* (and elsewhere) the word is quite common and entails this whole spectrum of meanings.¹³⁷ Also, in some cases it seems best translated as 'beautiful to see', even as 'attractiveness'.¹³⁸ But what do 'decus' and 'species' mean in Augustine's *De pulchro et apto* (or, in any case, in the retrospective report on the contents of his work)?

The sequel of his report provides a first answer:

Et animaduertebam et uidebam in ipsis corporibus aliud esse quasi totum et ideo *pulchrum*, aliud autem, quod ideo *deceret*, quoniam *apte* tum ad

135 *Conf.* 10,8 (CCL 27,159): 'Quid autem amo, cum te amo? Non speciem corporis nec decus temporis ...'.

136 E.g. in *conf.* 12,31 (CCL 27,232): 'Non enim adhuc informes sunt [sc. aquae] et inuisae, quas ita decora specie fluere cernimus'.

137 Cf. e.g. *conf.* 2,1 (CCL 27,18): '... et contabuit species mea ...'; *conf.* 2,12 (CCL 27,23): 'non saltem ut est quaedam defectiua species et umbratica uitii fallentibus'; *conf.* 3,17 (CCL 27,37): '... cum saepe se aliter habet species facti ...'; etc.

138 E.g. *conf.* 2,10 (CCL 27,22): 'Etenim species est pulchris corporibus ...'. Cf. e.g. BA 13,346: 'C'est un fait qu'il y a un aspect attrayant dans les beaux objets ...'.

pedem et similia. Et ista consideratio scaturriuit in animo meo ex intimo corde meo, et scripsi libros 'De Pulchro et Apto'¹³⁹

And I observed and perceived that in bodies themselves there is one thing as a kind of a whole and for that reason *beautiful*, and another which for that reason is *beautiful* because it is *harmoniously* fitting to some other thing, such as a part of the (human) body to its whole, or a shoe to a foot¹⁴⁰ and like instances. And this consideration gushed up into my mind from my inmost heart, and I wrote books 'On the beautiful and the harmonious' ...

This further explanation clarifies a bit more about the true meaning of 'decus' and 'species', although I think the best translation is 'beautiful' in both cases.

Fortunately, a completely different passage in Augustine's oeuvre not only sheds a surprising light on our whole passage *conf.* 4,20, but also clearly indicates in which way its keywords 'pulchrum', 'aptum', 'decus' and 'species' may (or even should) be interpreted from within a Manichaean context. In his anti-Manichaean work *De natura boni* it runs in a polemical passage on the kingdom of darkness and its rulers (*principes*):

nisi autem etiam qualiscumque *pulchritudo* ibi fuisset, nec amarent coniugia sua, nec partium *congruentia* corpora eorum constarent: quod ubi non fuerit, non possunt ea fieri quae ibi facta esse delirant. et nisi *pax* aliqua ibi esset, principi suo non obedirent. nisi *modus* ibi esset, nihil aliud agerent, quam comederent, aut biberent, aut saeuirent, aut quodlibet aliud sine aliqua satietate:¹⁴¹ quamquam nec ipsi qui hoc agebant, *formis* suis determinati essent, nisi *modus* ibi esset: nunc uero talia dicunt eos egisse, ut in omnibus actionibus suis *modos* sibi *congruos* habuisse negare non possint. si autem *species* ibi non fuisset, nulla ibi *qualitas* naturalis subsisteret. si nullus *ordo* ibi fuisset, non alii dominarentur, alii subderentur, non in suis elementis *congruenter* uiuerent, non denique

139 *Conf.* 4,20 (CCL 27,51).

140 These two examples seem to be *topoi* in rhetorical-philosophical literature; see for instance for the second one Cicero, *fin.* 3,46.

141 I suppose the best reading—with codex S(angallensis)—is *societate* and translate accordingly. On the meaning of *societas* as '(ordered) society' one may compare e.g. *ciu.* 15,8.

suis locis haberent membra *disposita*, ut illa omnia, quae uana isti fabulantur, agere possint.¹⁴²

But unless there had been some sort of *beauty* there, they (sc. the rulers of the kingdom of darkness) would not have loved their spouses, nor would their bodies have been steady by the *suitability* of their parts. If this *suitability* did not exist there, the things could not have happened there which in their madness they say happened there. And unless some *peace* had been there, they would not have obeyed their Prince. Unless *measure* had been there, they would have done nothing else than eat or drink, or rage, or whatever they might have done, without any *society*: although not even those who did these things would have had determinate *forms*, unless *measure* had been there. But now they (the Manichaeans) say that they (the rulers of darkness) did such things, they cannot deny that in all their actions they have had *measures suitable* to themselves. But if *attractiveness of form* had not been there, no natural *quality* would have there subsisted. If there had been no *order* there, some would not have ruled, others been ruled; they would not have lived *harmoniously* in their elements; and, finally, they would not have members *arranged* in their places, so that they could do all those things that they (sc. the Manichaeans) vainly fable.

These sentences constitute a digression in Augustine's account of the Manichaeans' opinions on the nature of good and evil. The digression is, as it were, a separate entity that can be extracted 'en bloc' from an argument in which a number of Manichaean views are discussed, all these opinions being introduced in a striking manner by 'dicunt' ('they say'), which seems to point directly to Manichaean sources. In between, Augustine unexpectedly gives his comment, as just indicated. He points out various inconsistencies in the Manichaean teaching about the kingdom of darkness: '*Nisi autem etiam ...*'. It is as if in this digression we hear a correcting view Augustine already expressed in *De pulchro et apto*. In any case, that supposed love, steadiness, obeisance, society, form etc. in the kingdom of darkness would not have been there without some sort of *pulchritudo*, *congruentia*, *pax*, *modus*, *species* and *ordo*. The most appropriate translation of *species* here seems to be 'attractiveness of form' or 'attractive/beautiful appearance'.

¹⁴² Nat. b. 41 (CSEL 25,875–876).

I also propose this last-mentioned rendering on the basis of the noteworthy fact that Mani, in his *Thesaurus*, speaks emphatically about *species*. Augustine transmits a long passage from its Book 7 in which ‘the blessed Father’ (...) ‘transforms his powers (*uirtutes*)’ and ‘makes them to show themselves to the hostile powers (*potestates*)’ in the ‘attractive appearance (*species*)’ of naked boys or bright virgins. By means of these ‘most beautiful appearances (*speciebus pulcherrimis*)’ they seduce the opposite sex.¹⁴³ Besides, *species* also occurs in Mani’s (?) *Epistula ad Menoch*, here also in the sense of ‘appearance’.¹⁴⁴

Based on the above, it may be concluded that in Augustine’s account of *De pulchro at apto*, *pulchrum* is best translated as ‘beautiful’, *aptum* as ‘harmonious’, *decus* as ‘splendour’ and *species* as ‘attractiveness of form’. It may also have become evident that close synonyms of these words can be used as well, provided that the (anti-) Manichaean context of the words is considered.

Finally, some additional remarks on ‘Monad’ and ‘Dyad’. Earlier, I have pointed to their likely origin as *philosophical* terms and tried to establish their meaning in *De pulchro et apto*. Here, after having indicated how some key terms in the work seem to have their true and full significance in Manichaean sources and even in Mani’s own writings, I add that also the terms ‘Monad’ and ‘Dyad’ may have been used by Mani himself. The self-styled ‘apostle of the true God, in the land of Babylon’¹⁴⁵ appears to have been aware of several Hellenistic philosophical views.¹⁴⁶ A key concept such as ‘Hylè’ seems to

143 *Nat. b.* 44 (CSEL 25,881–884), e.g. ‘tunc beatus ille pater, qui lucidas naues habet diuersoria et habitacula secundum magnitudines, pro insita sibi clementia fert opem, qua exiit et liberatur ab iniis retinaculis et angustiis atque angoribus suae uitalis substantiae. (...) quae [sc. *potestates*] quoniam ex utroque sexu masculorum ac feminarum consistunt, ideo praedictas uirtutes partim *specie* puerorum inuestium parere iubet generi aduerso feminarum, partim uirginum lucidarum forma generi contrario masculorum, sciens eas omnes hostiles potestates propter ingentem sibi letalem et spurcissimam concupiscentiam facillime capi atque iisdem *speciebus pulcherrimis*, quae adparent, mancipari hocque modo dissolui. (...) Itaque cum ratio poposcerit, ut masculis adpareant eadem sanctae uirtutes, illico etiam suam effigiem uirginum *pulcherrimarum* habitu demonstrant. rursus cum ad feminas uentum fuerit, postponentes *species* uirginum puerorum inuestium *speciem* ostendunt.’

144 *C. Iul. imp.* 3,172.187 (CSEL 85,473.487): ‘... ex quo genere animarum emanaueris, quod est confusum omnibus corporibus et saporibus et *speciebus* variis cohaeret;’ ... et post factum memoria sola eius operis, non ipsa *species* manet.’

145 Thus, in his *Shābuhragān* according to the Muslim writer Al-Bīrūnī; cf. e.g. A. Adam, *Texte zum Manichäismus*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter 1969², 6: ‘... meiner selbst, des Mani, des Gesandten des wahren Gottes, in das Land Babel’ and Reeves, *Prolegomena* (n. 57), 103: ‘... by me, Mānī, the apostle of the God of truth to Babylonia’.

146 Cf. e.g. A. Böhlig, ‘Denkformen hellenistischer Philosophie im Manichäismus’, *Perspektiven der Philosophie. Neues Jahrbuch* 1986, 12 (1986) 11–39.

have been derived directly from Greek sources and even occurs untranslated and countless times in his own writings and those of his followers. In the Manichaean texts available so far, neither the word 'Monad' nor 'Dyad' appear (although of course the concepts do!); however, Hegemonius' *Acta Archelai*¹⁴⁷ and, in its wake, Epiphanius in his *Panarion* mention Pythagoras as one of Mani's authorities.¹⁴⁸ It may very well be that young Augustine knew the terms (and its associated dualism) not only from his early rhetorical-philosophical studies,¹⁴⁹ but also directly from one or more Manichaean sources, perhaps even from one of Mani's own writings. Using these terms, he presented himself not only as a philosophically trained young rhetor, but also as a true Manichaean.

12 Conclusions and Final Remarks

At the end of this rather long exposition, my main conclusions are as follows:

- (1) Augustine's first writing was a thoroughly Manichaean work and therefore the reason for writing and what we know about its contents deserve to be understood first and foremost in this context;
- (2) the likely 'title' of the (two or three) books '*de pulchro et apto*' (*conf.* 4,20.26) is best translated as 'On the beautiful and the harmonious';
- (3) the work was not so much a treatise on beauty (i.e., '*de pulchritudine*') and so a purely theoretical 'work of aesthetics', but rather a philosophical and theological¹⁵⁰ work with a practical focus initially inspired by Augustine's *auditor*-ship;

147 Hegemonius, *Acta Archelai* 62,3 (ed. C.H. Beeson, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs 1906, 90): 'Hic ergo Scythianus dualitatem istam introducit contrariam sibi, quod ipse a Pythagora suscepit sicut et alli omnes huius dogmatis sectatores, qui omnes dualitatem defendunt ...'. As is well known, in Hegemonius' story Scythianus is presented as the direct forerunner (and even *alias*) of Mani.

148 Epiphanius, *Panarion haer.* 66,2,9 (ed. K. Holl, *Epiphanius*, 111, *Panarion haer.* 65–80, *De fide.* 2. bearbeitete Auflage herausgegeben von J. Dummer, Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1985, 18).

149 Cf. e.g. A. Solignac, 'Doxographies et manuels dans la formation philosophique de saint Augustin', *RA* 1 (1958) 113–148.

150 Cf. e.g. P. Alfarić, *L'Évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin*, 1: *Du Manichéisme au Néoplatonisme*, Paris: Émile Nourry 1918, 222: 'une expression publique de sa foi religieuse'. The same in J.J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine: An Introduction to the Confessions of St. Augustine* (1954), London-New York: Longman 1980, 97: 'a public expression of his Manichean faith'.

- (4) what Augustine reports about the contents of his work is strikingly in line with passages from Mani's and other Manichaean writings as well as with passages in Augustine's own works in which he addresses the Manichaeans either directly or indirectly;
- (5) in all likelihood, Augustine's work was written in the literary form of a dialogue, more specifically as a dialogical *monologue*;
- (6) its dedication to a certain Hierius and what Augustine reports about this person gives rise to the assumption that this (otherwise virtually unknown) Hierius was also a Manichaean;
- (7) the work's focus on the 'corporeal' as well as its speaking of 'virtue' and 'vice', 'unity' and 'division' and 'Monad' and 'Dyad' are best understood from within Manichaean texts;
- (8) Augustine will have learned the terms and concepts 'Monad' and 'Dyad' not only through his rhetorical training and philosophical studies, but almost certainly also from the philosophically inspired writings of either Mani himself or his followers. In his first writing, these concepts are fully interpreted within a Manichaean framework;
- (9) Augustine's illustrative speaking of the Dyad as being manifest in 'anger' and 'lust' is not only confirmed by many Manichaean texts, but also leads to the likely fact that (part of) his work was a practically oriented treatise on human behaviour;
- (10) the fact that several Manichaean texts link the causes of 'anger' and 'lust' to nourishment may suggest that this aspect also had a place in Augustine's first writing, as seems to be confirmed by a passage from *mor.* 2,43 as well as the *impetus* to the work being the questions of Manichaean *auditores*;
- (11) a comparison of the reported contents of *De pulchro et apto* with some passages in Augustine's anti-Manichaean works most likely indicates that 26- or 27-year-old Augustine reasoned not only on the basis of Manichaean beliefs, but also that he approached them critically and may have tried to rationally improve them;
- (12) *De pulchro et apto* seems to prove that Augustine's equation of God and the divine world with the beautiful is a notion which he—even before his discovery of (Neo-)Platonism—learned and intimated among the Manichaeans.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Cf. BeDuhn, 'Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma, I' (n. 10), 99, with reference (327 n. 111) to K.E. Lee, *Augustine, Manichaeism, and the Good*, New York: Peter Lang 1999.

In this chapter, of course, the last word about *De pulchro et apto* has not been said. In all likelihood, much more could have been remarked on its place in Augustine's philosophical, literary and spiritual development. For instance, did his speaking of *pulchrum*, *pulchritudo*, *aptum*, *species*, *decus*, etc. in *De pulchro et apto* influence his later views and how? Was its literary form possibly a precursor to his later dialogical-monological works, even influencing his perhaps most famous masterpiece, the *Confessiones*? What about the fact that the work is described by its author as an attempt to ascend to God ('*Sed ego conabar ad te ...*')? What about its likely mystical aspects? Is there a link between this work and Augustine's possible vegetarian behaviour?¹⁵² Why did he divide his work in two or three books?¹⁵³ Books, moreover, of which he states: 'We no longer possess them; they went astray from us, I do not know how'¹⁵⁴

These and other questions may remain for future research. Given the rapid development of Manichaeology and also in light of the growing interest in the anti-Manichaean works of Augustine,¹⁵⁵ one may even wish that—sometime in the foreseeable future—a full monograph will be dedicated to *De pulchro et apto* and its importance in the personal development of—and likely lasting influence on—the church father Augustine.

152 Cf. e.g. Possidius, *uita* 22 and also *conf.* 10,46.

153 The most plausible theories in this regard so far come from Alfarc and Solignac: see Alfarc, *Évolution* (n. 150), 223 n. 2 and Solignac, 'Le « De pulchro et apto »', *BA* 13, 670–673. But see also e.g. Cress, 'Augustine's Account' (n. 3), 155.

154 *Conf.* 4,20 (*CCL* 27,51): 'Nisi enim habemus eos, sed aberrauerunt a nobis nescio quo modo'.

155 Among the recent projects I especially mention: *Contre Fauste le manichéen / Contra Faustvm Manichaevm*, Livres I–XII (*BA* 18A). Sous la direction de M. Dulaey, Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes 2018; *Contre Fauste le manichéen / Contra Faustvm Manichaevm*, Livres XIII–XXI (*BA* 18B). Sous la direction de M. Dulaey, Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes 2020.

‘God’ in Augustine’s *Confessions* (conf. 1–7)

1 Introduction: The Very First Sentences of Augustine’s *Confessions*

*Augustine begins his *Confessions* with the following sentences:

Magnus es, domine, et laudabilis ualde: magna uirtus tua et sapientiae tuae non est numerus. Et laudare te uult homo, aliqua portio creaturae tuae, et homo circumferens mortalitatem suam, circumferens testimonium peccati sui et testimonium, quia superbis resistis: et tamen laudare te uult homo, aliqua portio creaturae tuae. Tu excitas, ut laudare te delectet, quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te.

CCL 27,1 (ed. L. Verheijen)¹

I translate these sentences as being poetry rather than prose:²

‘Great are You, Lord,
and highly to be praised:³
great is Your power,
and Your wisdom is beyond measure.’⁴
And man desires to praise You;
man, but a particle of Your creation;
man, carrying about with him his mortality,⁵
carrying about with him the testimony of his sin,

* First publication in *Religion and Theology* 30 (2023) 5–29, adapted to fit the flow and argument of this volume.

1 *Sancti Augustini Confessionum libri XIIII quos post Martinum Skytella iterum edidit Lucas Verheijen*, editio altera, Turnhout: Brepols 1990, 1.

2 For the style of the beginning of the *conf.*, see e.g. G. Bouissou, ‘Le jeu de vocabulaire et son sens dans les *Confessions*’ in *Œuvres de saint Augustin, Bibliothèque Augustinienne (BA)* 13, *Les Confessions*, Livres I–VII, Paris: Institut d’Études Augustiniennes 1962 (2^e édition 1992, réimpression 1998), 647–650. Cf. e.g. Chr. Mohrmann, ‘The *Confessions* as a literary Work of Art’ in *eadem, Études sur le latin des chrétiens*, 1, Roma: Edizioni di storia e letteratura 1958, 371–381.

3 Ps. 47 (Hebrew 48):2; 95 (Hebr. 96):4; 144 (Hebr. 145):3.

4 Ps. 146 (Hebr. 147):5.

5 Cf. 2 Cor. 4:10.

and the testimony that You 'resist the proud'.⁶
 Yet, man desires to praise You;
 he, but a particle of Your creation.
 You inspire man to delight in praising You;
 for You have made us towards You,
 and our heart is restless until it rests in You.

These well-known sentences are still puzzling. Augustine begins his *Confessions* by quoting from biblical Psalms speaking of (and in most cases directly to) God. But why does he quote from the Psalms? Why these verses in reference to God? And, above all, why is 'God' the main subject of his reflection?

Augustine addresses God: in fact, his long extensive writing in 13 books, called by himself '*the books of my confessions*',⁷ is one lengthy address to God. This mode of speech is continued from beginning to end. Regarding God, he uses words such as 'great' and 'praise' and 'testimony'. He goes on to emphasize that man is but a 'particle' of God's creation.

Why does Augustine use the literary form of a long prayer to God? Why a typical notion such as 'praise' to God that occurs four times in the quoted sentences and, all in all, as many as seven times in the opening paragraph of his work? Why the idea of man as a 'particle' of God's creation? And, last but not least, why his stress on 'rest' in God?

Gradually, some hidden meaning of the famous passage can be retrieved. Augustine was a Manichaean and several of his readers still were. They will have been able to read between the lines and discern an additional meaning. Original Manichaean texts disclose significant content allowing these overtones to be heard:

'Great are *You*, Lord,
 and highly to be *praised*:
 great is *Your* power,
 and *Your* wisdom is beyond measure.'

Throughout his Manichaean period, Augustine venerated God as 'the Father of Greatness':

6 Prov. 3:34 Vetus Latina; 1Pt. 5:5; Jas. 4:6.

7 Augustine, *retr.* 2,6 (CCL 57,94): 'Confessionum meorum libri tredecim ...'.

The Father of Greatness is worthy of all glory ...

Glory and honour to Amen,
the Father of Greatness.⁸

Manichaean texts also praise God's 'power' (*uirtus*) and 'wisdom' (*sapientia*): these essential attributes of God are seen as manifestations of Christ.⁹ Moreover, God is considered to be 'immeasurable':

The Father of Greatness,
the blessed one of glory,
the one who has no measure in his greatness.¹⁰

The reason why man must not only praise God, *this* God, but also repeatedly and profoundly confess his sins and restlessly seek for the true rest¹¹ in God will have penetrated to the very depths of Augustine's soul during his time as a Manichaean *auditor*.

Augustine, the Christian 'Everyman' speaking here, confesses to be not a particle of *Light* (i.e., of God's substance), but of *God's creation*. Biblical, classical, (Neoplatonic) philosophical, perhaps Hermetic tones can be heard in these opening sentences.¹² However, a new disclosure of Augustine's literary masterpiece deliberately called '*Confessiones*' seems to be possible when one discovers its Manichaean overtones. They are some sort of *cantus firmus*, from beginning to end.

8 C.R.C. Allberry (ed., transl.), *A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, Part II, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1938, 133 and 191. Cf. S.G. Richter (ed., transl.), *Psalm Book*, Part II, Fasc. 2, *Die Herakleides-Psalmen* (CFM, Series Coptica, 1), Turnhout: Brepols 1998, 67.

9 Cf. above, 2 Cor. 4:10.

10 See e.g. I. Gardner (transl.), *The Kephalaia of the Teacher*, Leiden-New York-Köln: Brill 1995 (repr. 2016), 38.

11 See e.g. Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 12,26; 26,23 etc. Cf. e.g. J. Helderman, 'Zum Doketismus und zur Inkarnation im Manichäismus', in A. Van Tongerloo & S. Giversen (eds.), *Manichaica Selecta*, Louvain: IAMS 1991, 101–123 who concludes (123): '... [es] kann festgestellt werden, daß die Ruhe als das Herzstück der manichäischen Frömmigkeit gelten könne'.

12 See e.g. J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine, Confessions*, II: *Commentary on Books 1–7*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992 (repr. 2002), 8 ff.

2 Analysis of the First Sentences

How and to what extent does Augustine address his former fellow believers about God in the *Confessions*? A further analysis of the work's first sentences may serve as our primal proof.

Research of the past years in particular made it clear that the *Confessiones*—at least for an important part—are directed at the Manichaeans.¹³ As we have seen, Augustine begins by quoting from some biblical Psalms, which texts are not chosen by chance. The awareness that 'God is great' belongs to the central tenets of Manichaean belief. In Mani's *Fundamental Epistle*, which was very well known to Augustine, it runs:

The Father himself is exalted in His glory (*laus*, litt.: 'praise'), incomprehensible in His greatness. He has in union with Himself the blessed and glorious aeons which are inestimable in number and extent ...¹⁴

This recalls a famous passage about God in the so-called 'Song of the Lovers' (*Amatorium canticum*) that Augustine (and no one else!) quotes in his work against the Manichaean bishop Faustus:

Do you recall your 'Song of the Lovers' in which you describe the supreme reigning Monarch, forever sceptre-bearing, crowned with flowers and possessing a fiery countenance? Etc.¹⁵

God is depicted in His magnitude. The Manichaean song continues by describing that God 'is surrounded' (*circumcingitur*) by his 'twelve aeons' (*duodecim saecula*), 'which twelve are certain great gods, three in each of the four regions' (... *ipsos duodecim magnos quosdam deos ... , ternos per quattuor tractus ...*). As in the *Confessions*, the Manichaean deity is said to be 'immeasurable' (*inmensum*).

13 See e.g. the studies by P. Courcelle, E. Feldmann, A. Kotzé and myself referred to in J. van Oort, *Mani and Augustine. Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2020 (repr. 2023), e.g. 182, 260, 263–264 etc.

14 *C. ep. fund.* 13 (*CSEL* 25,209): 'Ipse uero Pater in sua laude praecipuus, magnitudine incomprehensibilis, copulata habet sibi beata et gloriosa saecula, neque numero, neque prolixitate aestimanda ...'.

15 *C. Faust.* 15,5 (*CSEL* 25,425): 'annon recordaris amatorium canticum tuum, ubi describis maximum regnantem regem, sceptrigerum perennem, floreis coronis cinctum et facie rutilantem?'

The same we find in other Manichaean writings. It may suffice to quote only two texts from the so-called *Kephalaia* ('Main Points', 'Chapters'), some sort of dogmatic-systematic treatises that supposedly come directly as oral teachings from Mani:

The first Father is the Father of Greatness, the blessed One of glory, the one who has no measure to his greatness ...¹⁶

For there is no measure nor rule to the heights of the Father.¹⁷

During his years as an *auditor*, Augustine will have practiced four daily prayers or songs to God.¹⁸ Many Manichaean examples of prayers to the Father of Greatness have been collected by Hans Joachim Klimkeit in his *Hymnen und Gebete der Religions des Lichts*.¹⁹ Klimkeit even has a separate section 'Hymnen an den Vater der Größe'.²⁰

God is not only great, but he is also 'highly to be praised'. As in the quoted biblical Psalms, Manichaean texts stress that God should be *praised*. Apart from Mani's just cited *Fundamental Epistle* ('The Father ... exalted in His *praise*'), I recall that the reading of Mani's Gospel was introduced with a prayer in which a number of Manichaean deities, including the Father of Greatness, were abundantly *praised*. It is quite likely that Augustine heard such introducing prayers as have come down to us in the Turfan fragments M17 and M172 I²¹ when, during the Bêma Festival, Mani's Gospel was read. As an *auditor* he was obliged to make a full confession of his sins once a year, at the feast of the Bêma. Not

16 Kephalaia 34,21 ff. in H.J. Polotsky (ed., transl.), *Kephalaia*, Band 1, 1. Hälfte, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1940; Gardner, *Kephalaia* (n. 10), 38.

17 Polotsky, *Kephalaia*, 71,24; Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 73. Cf. Polotsky, *Kephalaia*, 64,22: 'kein Maß (*métron*)'. Cf. C. Schmidt & H.J. Polotsky, *Ein Mani-Fund in Ägypten. Originalschriften des Mani und seiner Schüler*, Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften in Komm. bei W. de Gruyter 1933, 64.

18 As was the Manichaean practice for the *auditores*. See e.g. K. Rudolph, *Gnosis. The Nature and History of Gnosticism*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark 1983, 341, who also mentions that seven daily prayers or songs were prescribed for the Elect.

19 H.-J. Klimkeit, *Hymnen und Gebete der Religion des Lichts. Iranische und türkische Texte der Manichäer Zentralasiens*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag 1989. Cf. *idem*, *Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Texts from Central Asia*, San Francisco: Harper 1993.

20 Klimkeit, *Hymnen und Gebete*, 57–63. Cf. *idem*, *Gnosis on the Silk Road*, 29–33: 'Hymns to the Father of Light'.

21 See e.g. in Klimkeit, *Hymnen und Gebete*, 184–185. Cf. *idem*, *Gnosis on the Silk Road*, 146.

least in the Bêma-Psalms of the Coptic *Psalmbook* we hear the call to praise God, the Father of Greatness.²² Besides, this call resounds in many other Manichaean texts.²³

All this may be noted in reference to the first half sentence of Augustine's *Confessions* addressing God. The entire work, of which (as in so many works from classical Antiquity) the main theme is indicated in the first sentences, is basically about 'God'.

The second half is indicative as well: 'great is Your power, and Your wisdom is beyond measure'. The 'You' addressed is God the Father. As we have seen, by God's 'power' and 'wisdom' Jesus Christ is meant, as already in Paul's 1 Cor. 1:24. The Manichaeans knew and venerated this Pauline concept, as we especially learn from the *Chapters (Capitula)* of their bishop Faustus.²⁴ The very first Bible text Augustine ever alluded to is the very same 1 Cor. 1:24,²⁵ namely in his first preserved work *On the Academics*.²⁶ The only other Bible text in the same work dedicated to his benefactor Romanianus—by then still a Manichaean—is Mt. 7:7: 'seek and you shall find', a Manichaean stock text as well.²⁷

In the very first sentences of the *Confessions* the emphasis is upon God's creative activity. From the context, I read this as being anti-Manichaean polemic. Twice it is stated that man, even man with his mortal and sinful body, is 'a *part*

22 E.g. *Psalm of the Bema* 224 (Allberry 12,19 ff.): '... all the saints that are counted to the Light / glorify him [sc. Jesus] and give him] praises without measure'.

23 See e.g. the just quoted *Kephalaia*. There it runs about the Father of Greatness (64,25 ff.): 'Fünf große Licht-Glieder (*mélôs*) befinden sich an jedem einzelnen, fünf große Quellen des Lobpreises sprudeln hervor ...'. Cf. Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 67: 'Now, there are five great light lim[bs] / in each one [...] five grea[t] / springs of praise gush for[th ...]':

24 C. Faust. 20,2 (CSEL 25,536): '... filium uero in hac secunda ac uisibili luce consistere, qui quoniam sit et ipse geminus, ut eum apostolus nouit Christum dicens esse dei uirtutem et dei sapientiam. uirtutem quidem eius in sole habitare credimus, sapientiam uero in luna'. Cf. J.D. BeDuhn, "Not to depart from Christ": Augustine between "Manichaean" and "Catholic" Christianity', in J. van Oort (ed.), *Augustine and Manichaean Christianity. Selected Papers from the First South African Conference on Augustine of Hippo, University of Pretoria, 24–26 April 2012*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2013, 10: 'The characterization [sc. Christ as the 'Power and Wisdom of God'], derived from 1 Cor. 1:24, was a favorite among the Manichaeans, referring to Christ in his transcendent aspect as *nous* and *dynamis* ...'.

25 Cf. the remark of A.-M. La Bonnardière in the discussion following A. Pincherle's (Italian) report 'Les sources platoniciennes de l'augustinisme', *Augustinus Magister*, 3, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1955, 100.

26 *Acad.* 2,1 (CCL 29,18): 'oro autem ipsam summi dei uirtutem atque sapientiam'. Cf. for some other early quotations of 1 Cor. 1:24: *b. uita* 4,25 and 34 (CCL 29,79 and 84) and *mor.* 1,21.22.28 (CSEL 90,26 and 33).

27 See below.

of Your creation'.²⁸ Later Augustine tells that, as a Manichaean, he had thought that God was an immense, luminous body and he himself, man, a *particle* of it.²⁹ According to Manichaean doctrine, as stated in e.g. Augustine's *The Morals of the Manichaeans*, the human soul is a *pars Dei*.³⁰

It is no coincidence that Augustine also quotes in the first sentences the favourite passage of the Manichaeans just mentioned, i.e., Mt. 7:7b (cf. v. 8): 'Those who seek shall find Him'.³¹ This very same biblical text resounds at the close of the whole work: 'Let it be asked of You, sought in You, knocked for at You; so, even so shall it be received, so shall it be found, so shall it be opened'.³²

In the opening paragraph of the *Confessions*, the first evident criticism of the Manichaean concept of God also appears: 'But who calls upon You when he does not know You (*nesciens te*)? In his ignorance (*nesciens*) he may invoke *something else for You*'.³³ In the following paragraphs Augustine argues against a material-spatial concept of God, as it was featured by the Manichaeans in particular.

Looking for the other occurrences of the just quoted *nesciens* and *nescire*, one perceives that the verb is used several times in an anti-Manichaean context.³⁴ The Gnostic Manichaeans claim to know the truth, but they do *not* know: especially they are the nitwits, the ignorant ones (e.g. *conf.* 9,8). This definitely applies to their concept of God.

Apart from the just quoted instances (God is *magnus, laudabilis* etc.; man is a part of His creation), Augustine's claim that God is the Creator has a doubtless

28 *Conf.* 1,1 (CCL 27,1): 'Et laudare te uult homo, aliqua *portio creaturae tuae* ...; et tamen laudare te uult homo, aliqua *portio creaturae tuae*'.

29 *Conf.* 4,31 (CCL 27,55): 'Sed quid mihi hoc proderat putanti, quod tu, domine deus ueritas, corpus esses lucidum et immensum et ego *frustum* de illo corpore?'

30 *Mor.* 2,21 (CSEL 90,107): 'Animam quippe deum esse dicitis uel partem dei'.

31 *Conf.* 1,1 (CCL 27,1): 'Quaerentes enim inueniunt eum et inuenientes laudabunt eum'. Cf. e.g. *mor. eccl. cath.* 31 (CSEL 90,36): 'Hinc est illud, quod in ore habere etiam uos [sc. the Manichaeans] soletis, quod ait: *Petite et accipietis, quaerite et inuenietis, pulsate et aperietur uobis* ...' and *util. cred.* 30 (CSEL 25,37–38).

32 *Conf.* 13,53 (CCL 27,273): 'sic, sic accipietur, sic inuenietur, sic aperietur'; cf. *conf.* 12,1 and, for instance, 11,3; 11,4; 11,5.

33 *Conf.* 1,1 (CCL 27,1): 'Sed quis te inuocat nesciens te? Aliud enim pro alio potest inuocare nesciens'. Cf. e.g. *conf.* 7,20!

34 E.g. *conf.* 3,18 (CCL 27,37): 'Haec ergo *nesciens* inridebam illos sanctos seruos et prophetas tuos'; 4,26 (CCL 27,53): '... et dicebam paruulis fidelibus tuis, ciuibus meis, a quibus *nesciens* exulabam, dicebam illis garrulus et ineptus ...'; 9,8 (CCL 27,137): 'Quam uehementi et acri dolore indignabar manichaeis et miserabar eos rursus, quod illa sacramenta, illa medicamenta *nescirent* ...'; 9,9 (CCL 27,138): '... sed ego *nesciebam* ...'; '... et ego tandiu *nesciens* unitatem dilexi et mendacium quaesiui ...'.

anti-Manichaean intention. In *conf.* 1,2 it is not only stressed against the Manichaeans that God made heaven and earth, but also that 'without You, whatever exists would not exist'. In other words, evil is not an independent entity, as the Manichaeans claim.

3 God Not 'Material' but 'Triadic'/'Trinitarian'

From the beginning of the *Confessions*, it is evident that Augustine struggles with a *material* (and, by consequence, *spatial/corporeal*) concept of God. Many Christians in Roman Africa held a material idea of God. Tertullian is the prominent example in this regard, and he seems to have been influenced by the Stoa.³⁵ But also many simple Christians in Augustine's own time and world thought and spoke about God in material-corporeal and even anthropomorphic terms.³⁶ This might indicate persistent Jewish influences in African Christianity,³⁷ or just an overly literal reading of the Bible, especially the Old Testament.

Augustine's arguments against the Manichaeans' view of God, against their denouncement of the Creator of the universe and His creation, can be found in many passages of the *Confessions*, particularly in its first three and last three books. Time and again one reads phrases such as '*domine deus, ordinatorem et creator rerum omnium naturalium*': Lord God, Ruler and Creator of all things in nature,³⁸ while expressions such as '*creator omnium*', '*creator universae creaturae*', '*creator noster*' appear nearly everywhere.³⁹

As early as in *conf.* 1,12, God is addressed as:

... You, the One, from whom is all manner of being, supreme Beauty, who forms all things and by Your law orders everything.⁴⁰

35 Although with qualification, see e.g. R. Braun, '*Deus Christianorum*': *Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1977, 182 and 194.

36 See e.g. Augustine, *mor.* 1,17 (*CSEL* 90,20-21). Cf. the instances from the *conf.* quoted below.

37 See e.g. J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon. A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities*, Leiden etc.: Brill 1991 (repr. Leiden-Boston: Brill 2013), 365-371; also my *The Role of the Hebrew Diaspora in the Origins of Christianity in Roman North Africa*, Tblisi: Academy of Sciences of Georgia/The K. Kekelidze Institute of Manuscripts 1992 (second revised edition 1996) as well as 'Jewish Elements in the Origin of North African Christianity', in T. Mgaloblishvili (ed.), *Ancient Christianity in the Caucasus*, Richmond, Surrey UK: Curzon Press 1998 [published 1999] 97-105.

38 *Conf.* 1,16 (*CCL* 27,9). Cf. e.g. 10,52; 10,57; 11,7; etc.

39 Cf. e.g. *conf.* 2,12: '*creator omnium*'; 2,14: '*creatorem te esse omnis naturae*'; etc.

40 *Conf.* 1,12 (*CCL* 27,7): '... tu, une, a quo est omnis modus, formosissime, qui formas omnia et lege tua ordinas omnia ...'.

This choice of words is deliberate: the triad *modus* (manner of being), *forma* or *species* (the principle of individuation or differentiation) and *ordo* (order, arrangement) can be found throughout the *Confessions* and is directed against the Manichaeans in particular.⁴¹ This triad (or a variation of it) we find in *De Genesi contra Manichaeos*,⁴² *De Genesi ad litteram*,⁴³ *Contra epistulam fundamenti*⁴⁴ and, particularly, as a *Leitmotif* in the anti-Manichaean treatise *De natura boni*:

For we, Catholic Christians, worship God, from whom are all good things ... from whom is all manner of being ... from whom is all form ... from whom is all order ...⁴⁵

Here Augustine, against the Manichaeans and their misappreciation of the Creator and His creation, refers to the Nicene-orthodox Trinity. We also find the triad in Neoplatonic tradition as *ousía*, *eĩdos*, *táxis*.⁴⁶ By Augustine it is mainly directed against the Manichaeans.

4 Stages on Augustine's Way to a Spiritual Concept of God (*conf.* 3–6)

I pass over the many texts in the following paragraphs and even books of the *Confessions* in which Augustine briefly polemizes against the Manichaean concept of God by saying that God is the real Creator, and that He is 'immutable', 'inviolable', 'incorruptible' and, for instance, 'incontaminable'. The truly

41 See also its variation in the parallel triad from *Sap.* 11:21 in e.g. *conf.* 5,7 (CCL 27,60): '... et neglegens tui, qui omnia in *mensura* et *numero* et *pondere* disposuisti'. For its general function in Augustine's thinking, see e.g. M.-A. Vannier, «Creatio», «conversio», «formatio» chez s. Augustin, Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse 1991 (repr. 1997) and, in particular, O. du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin. Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu'en 391*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1966, e.g. 422.

42 E.g. *Gen. c. Man.* 1,32 (MPL 34,188–189).

43 E.g. *Gen. litt.* 4,7 (MPL 34,299).

44 E.g. *c. ep. fund.* 29; 30; 31; 33; 41 (CSEL 25,229 ff.).

45 *Nat. b.* 3 (CSEL 25, 856): 'Nos enim catholici christiani deum colimus, a quo omnia bona sunt ... a quo est omnis *modus* ... a quo omnis *species* ... a quo omnis *ordo* ...'. See for further parallels and discussion J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine, Confessions II & III, Commentary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992 (repr. 2002), esp. 11, 46–51.

46 Cf. e.g. W. Theiler, *Porphyrios und Augustin*, Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag 1933, 11–12, 32–34; P. Remes, *Plotinus on Self: The Philosophy of the 'We'*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007, 63 ff.

innumerable texts of this kind occur from beginning to end of the work and prove the writer's constant dialogue with his former fellow believers.⁴⁷

I now concentrate on a number of texts that show some pivotal stages of Augustine's way to a spiritual view of God. They culminate in Book 7, shortly before and at the time when Augustine becomes acquainted with the books of 'the Platonists' who teach him this spiritual concept.

A good point of departure seems to be *conf.* 3,12, a passage reflecting Augustine's status when he had just made his acquaintance with the Manichaeans. In translation, the text⁴⁸ runs as follows:

For I was ignorant as to that which really is, and was, as it were, violently moved to give my support to foolish deceivers [i.e., the Manichaeans], when they asked me, "Whence is evil?" and, "Is God limited by a bodily shape (*forma corporea*), and has He hairs and nails?" and, "Are they to be esteemed righteous who had many wives at once and did kill men, and sacrificed living creatures?" Ignorant of all this as I was, these questions troubled me, and while I thought I was drawing close to the truth, I was actually moving away from it. For I did not know that evil does not exist except as the privation of good, to the point of complete nonexistence. And how could I perceive this, when for me the act of seeing consisted simply in seeing bodies with the eye, and an image (*phantasma*) with the mind? And I did not know that God is a Spirit, not a figure whose limbs have length and breadth and who has mass. For mass (*moles*) is less in a part than in its whole and, if it is infinite, it is less in such part defined within a given space than in its unlimited extension. It is not everywhere entire as Spirit is (*non est tota ubique sicut spiritus*), as God is. And what that should be in us, by which we were like unto God, and might rightly in Scripture be said to be after "the image of God", I was entirely ignorant.

In this text, Augustine undoubtedly reflects the Manichaean idea of God. God has a *corporeal* form; He is mass (*moles*); He has members (*membra*); He is greater in greater parts than in smaller ones. This last problem, caused by *material/spatial* ways of thinking of God, sc. those the Manichaeans in particular, was already briefly discussed in *conf.* 1,3: Do big vases (*uasae*) contain more of God

47 For *immutabilis/incommutabilis*, see e.g. *conf.* 1,4; 10,36; 12,35; 13,5; 13,10; for *inuolabilis* e.g. *conf.* 7,1 (discussion below); for *in corruptibilis* e.g. *conf.* 7,6; 13,5; for *incontaminabilis* e.g. *conf.* 7,4.

48 CCL 27,33.

than small ones? Even near the very beginning of his whole work comprising 13 books, especially the *Manichaean* concept of God governs his considerations.

In fact, this is also the case in the phase of Augustine's deliberations described in Book 5,19–20. Here again we see two essential problems connected with each other. On the one hand, he reports that he cannot return to the Catholic faith of his youth because he believes that it presents God anthropomorphically; on the other hand, it appears that he (meantime arrived in Rome) is still completely caught up in Manichaean ways of thinking:

And because, when I wanted to think of my God, the only way how to do so was a physical form (litt.: a mass of bodies, *moles corporum*)—for I thought that nothing existed that was not corporeal/physical—this was the greatest and almost sole cause of my inevitable error. [5,20] Because of this I also believed that there was such a substance of evil (...) And because my faith, such as it was, compelled me to believe that the good God never created any evil nature, I conceived two masses (*duas moles*) opposed to each other, both infinite, but the evil one more restricted, the good one more expansive. (...) And it appeared to me more devout to believe You, my God, (...) infinite, at least, on all other sides, although I was forced to admit You were finite on that one side where the mass of evil was in opposition to You, than to hold that You were confined on every side by the form of a human body.

The extent to which Augustine is indeed still completely caught up in Manichaean ways of thinking is evidenced by his speaking of the substance of evil. Evil is, like God, 'a material substance', further specified as 'a hideous and disfigured mass (*moles*), either dense, which they called earth, or thin and subtle, as is the body of the air'.⁴⁹ They imagine (*imaginantur*) that 'airy body' as 'a kind of evil mind (*mens*) crawling over the earth'.⁵⁰ Augustine passes on Manichaean representations that are (until now) not found in such detail anywhere else. The representation of two opposing masses (*duas moles*, sc. God and evil) may well have been presented to him from Mani's missionary *Picture Book* or

49 *Conf.* 5,20 (CCL 27,68): 'Hinc enim et mali substantiam quandam credebam esse talem et habere suam molem tetram et deformem siue crassam, quam terram dicebant, siue tenuem atque subtilem, sicuti aeris corpus ...'.

50 *Conf.* 5,20 (CCL 27,68): '... quam malignam mentem per illam terram repentem imaginantur.' I see no reason to read, with several mss., '*repente*' instead of '*repentem*': evil (here rightly termed a *mens*, such as e.g. in Mani's *Epistula fundamenti*) as a creeping dragon is a well-known image in Manichaean sources.

Eikōn, which after all began with such a picture;⁵¹ the detail that they represented that 'airy body' as 'a kind of evil mind (*mens*) crawling over the earth' indicates the knowledge of the real initiate.

A next important phase is found in Book 6. In *conf.* 6,4 (Augustine is in Milan and under the influence of Ambrose) he says that at that time he still thinks anthropomorphically about God: his problem is that he cannot think a spiritual substance. But he already adheres to the opinion that God does *not* have *membra*: 'it is not that some parts of You are greater while other are smaller'.⁵² This opinion is evidently anti-Manichaean. From Augustine's communication on the content the 'Song of the Lovers' in *Against Faustus*, we know the Manichaean view that God has members of different size, not created by Him but produced from His substance.⁵³ Augustine rejects this: God is '*ubique totus*: everywhere You are present in Your entirety'.⁵⁴ We find this notion already formulated as question in *conf.* 1,3,⁵⁵ and as a not yet known truth in *conf.* 3,12.⁵⁶ The opinion reminds one both of Plotinus⁵⁷ and Milan's bishop Ambrose: '*nusquam locorum es*: You are never confined to one place'.⁵⁸ In *conf.* 6,4 it is again stated as a new insight: 'You do not have a body like a human'.⁵⁹ In *conf.* 6,6 Augustine repeats his problem that he can think *spiritualia* only *corporaliter*.⁶⁰

51 See e.g. Zs. Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2015, esp. ch. 6: 'Subject Repertoire and Iconography'.

52 *Conf.* 6,4 (CCL 27,76): 'Tu ... cui membra non sunt alia maiora et alia minora ...'.

53 *C. Faust.* 15,5 (CSEL 25,425): 'sequeris enim cantando (...) et ipsos duodecim magnos quosdam deos profiteris, ternos per quattuor tractus, quibus ille unus circumcingitur. quem quomodo immensum facitis, quem sic circumdatum dicatis, numquam inuenire potuistis. adiungis etiam innumerabiles regnicolas et deorum agmina et angelorum cohortes: quae omnia non condidisse dicis deum, sed de sua substantia genuisse'. In all this, one might be reminded of speculations such as in Jewish kabbalistic traditions; cf. e.g. G. Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead. Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah*, New York: Schocken Books 1991.

54 *Conf.* 6,4 (CCL 27,76): 'Tu enim, altissime et proxime, secretissime et praesentissime, cui membra non sunt alia maiora et alia minora, sed ubique totus es et nusquam locorum es, non es utique forma ista corporea, tamen fecisti hominem ad imaginem tuam ...'.

55 *Conf.* 1,3 (CCL 27,2): 'An ubique totus es ...'?

56 *Conf.* 3,12 (CCL 27,33): 'et non est [sc. *moles*] tota ubique sicut spiritus, sicut deus'.

57 *Enn.* 6,4-5; cf. e.g. R.J. O'Connell, 'Ennead VI, 4 and 5 in the Works of Saint Augustine', *REA* 9 (1963) 1-39; Du Roy, *Intelligence* (n. 40), 469-470.

58 Most clear in *De fide* 1,16,106: '... *ubique totus* eodemque tempore uel in caelo, uel in terris, uel in nouissimo maris praesens'. Cf. e.g. Du Roy, *Intelligence*, 470.

59 *Conf.* 6,4 (CCL 27,76): '... non es utique forma ista corporea ...'.

60 *Conf.* 6,6 (CCL 27,77): '... *spiritualia*, de quibus cogitare nisi *corporaliter* nesciebam'.

The texts from his *Confessions* mentioned thus far (they are only a few of many) briefly show Augustine's struggle with the problem of how to conceive God. The historical order Augustine suggests will not have been exactly as he tells, because solutions he got later are by and then reported for earlier times. But there is no reason to doubt the correctness of the phases of his literally *theo-logical* struggle: from anthropomorphic-spatial thinking about God to corporeal/material-spatial thinking and then—via a very confused stage—to a strictly spiritual concept.

5 The Essential Stage: Augustine's Discovery of a Merely Spiritual Understanding of God (*conf.* 7)

I now come to the most important passage in our context, i.e., *conf.* 7,1–2.⁶¹ I apologize for the fact that it is long, but the focus will be on some key concepts. The text runs in translation, with some essential explanations that may facilitate a first and preliminary understanding:

By now that evil and abominable adolescence of mine was dead, and I was entering into early manhood. The more I increased in years, the more foul in vanity, I who could not conceive of any substance unless it was such as I saw with my own eyes.⁶² From the time I began to hear something of wisdom,⁶³ I did not conceive of You in the shape of the human body.⁶⁴ I always avoided this; I was glad when I found the same concept in the faith of our spiritual mother, Your Catholic Church. But how otherwise to conceive of You I could not see. And I, a mere human, and such a human, sought to conceive of You, the supreme and sole and true God, and with all my heart I believed You to be incorruptible, and inviolable, and unchangeable.⁶⁵ Although I did not know why or how, it was clear to me and certain that what is corruptible (*quod corrumpi potest*) is inferior to that which cannot be corrupted, and what cannot be violated (*uiolare non potest*) I without hesitation preferred before that

61 *Conf.* 7,1–2 (CCL 27,92–93).

62 I.e., corporeal, and thus, by implication, material and spatial.

63 A rather enigmatic sentence. Does he refer to his reading of Cicero's *Hortensius*; or to his later reading of many philosophical texts as indicated in e.g. *conf.* 5,3 ff.; 5,25 and 6,7?

64 I.e., anthropomorphic.

65 Again, and still, the anti-Manichaean orientation: God is *incorruptibilis*, *inuiolabilis*, *incommutabilis*.

which can, and I deemed that which suffers no change to be better than that which is changeable.⁶⁶ Vehemently my heart cried out against all my phantasmas (*phantasmata*),⁶⁷ and with this one blow I tried to expel from the eye of my mind (*ab acie mentis meae*) the swarm of impurity (*turba immunditiae*) that fluttered around.⁶⁸ Hardly had it been removed when, in the flash of an eye,⁶⁹ it had regrouped and was back again. It attacked my power of vision and clouded it. Although You were not in the shape of the human body (*non forma humani corporis*), I nevertheless felt forced to imagine something corporeal (*corporeum aliquid*), occupying space (*per spatia locorum*) diffused either in the world or even through infinite space outside the world. I thought of this as incorruptible (*incorruptibile*), inviolable (*inuiolabile*) and unchangeable (*incommutabile*), which I set above what is corruptible (*corruptibili*), violable (*uiolabili*), and changeable (*commutabili*).⁷⁰ But I thought that anything from which space (*spatium*) was abstracted was nothing (*nihil*),⁷¹ absolutely nothing (*nihil*), not even some vacuum (*inane*),⁷² as when a body (*corpus*) were removed from its place and the place should remain empty of any body (*omni corpore*), whether (a body of) earth, water, air, or heaven, but should remain an empty place (*locus inanis*)—a spatial nothing, as it were (*tamquam spatiosum nihil*).

7.2. So my heart had become gross,⁷³ and I had no clear vision even of my own self. I thought simply non-existent anything not extended in space or diffused or concentrated or expanding, or which did not or could not receive some kind of dimension. My eyes are accustomed to such forms (*formae*); my heart to such images (*imagines*). I did not see that

66 Again, clear polemics against the Manichaean conceptions of God.

67 I.e., all the corporeal images in my mind. *Phantasma* is in Augustine's *conf.* a very indicative term, already used in *conf.* 3.10 for the Manichaean ways of thinking about God. Cf. above the quote from *conf.* 3.12 and for further elucidation e.g. J. van Oort, 'The Young Augustine's Knowledge of Manichaeism: An Analysis of the *Confessions* and Some Other Relevant Texts', VC 62 (2008) 441–466, revised and updated in *Mani and Augustine* (n. 13), 221–244.

68 For this and the following sentences on the *turba immunditiae* and its behaviour, one may compare passages from the conversion story *conf.* 8.13–26, esp. *conf.* 8.26. 'Circumuolantem turbam immunditiae' might echo Virgil's *Aeneis* 3.233.

69 Cf. 1 Cor. 15:52.

70 All still in the context of the explicit anti-Manichaean pattern of reasoning.

71 I.e., non-existent. Further on *nihil* below.

72 Or void. This already seems to echo a Neoplatonic view, cf. e.g. Plotinus, *Enn.* 6.4.3: *to kenón*, the void, the emptiness, the empty space.

73 Cf. Mt. 13:15; Act. 28:27.

the mental power (*intentio*) by which I formed these images (*imagines*) is no such a thing,⁷⁴ though it could not form them unless it were some great thing (*magnum aliquid*).⁷⁵ So I conceived even You, life of my life, as a colossal being permeating infinite space on every side (*grandem per infinita spatia undique*), penetrating the entire mass of the world (*penetrare totam mundi molem*), and outside this extending in all directions for immense distances without end. So the earth had⁷⁶ You, the heaven had You, all things had You, they would reach their limit in You, but You would have no limit. Just as the sunlight meets no obstacle in the body of the air⁷⁷ to stop it from passing through and penetrating it without breaking it up or splitting it, but fills it entirely: so I thought that You permeated not only the body (*corpus*) of heaven and air and sea but even of the earth. In all its parts, both the greatest and the smallest, it was penetrable (*penetrabile*) to receive Your presence, so that by a secret breath of life⁷⁸ You rule all things You created, both internally and externally. So I suspected, because I was incapable of thinking otherwise; but it was false (*nam falsa erat*). For in this way would a greater part of the earth (*maior pars terrae*) contain a greater part of You (*maiores tui partem*), and a smaller part less. And so all things would be full of You, but in such a way that the body (*corpus*) of an elephant would hold more of You than that of a sparrow, according to how much larger it is and occupies more space (*locum*). And so should You make the portions (*partes*) of Yourself present unto the several portions (*partes*) of the world, in pieces (*frustatim*), great to the great, little to the little. Obviously, this is not the case. But You had not yet lightened my darkness.⁷⁹

The entire passage is rich in detail and unresolved questions. It is also rather confusing. One thing is very clear: although he no longer shares it, the Manichaean view of God⁸⁰ as being corruptible, violable, and mutable is still in

74 '... non est tale aliquid', i.e., it does not occupy any space etc. In other words, it is real, but not material.

75 Cf. Plotinus, *Enn.* 4,2,1.

76 I.e., would contain.

77 I.e., this air, above the earth. The Manichaeans believed in an uncreated air (*aer ingenuitus*), as both the Manichaeans Felix and Faustus confess: 'immo tres sunt, pater ingenuitus, terra ingenuita et aer ingenuitus' (c. *Fel.* 1,18; cf. c. *Faust.* 20,2).

78 The wording '*occulta inspiratione*' reminds of Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2,7,19.

79 Cf. Ps. 17 (Hebr. 18):29.

80 Cf. e.g. the profession (*professio*) of the Manichaean presbyter Fortunatus in his debate with Augustine, c. *Fort.* 3.

Augustine's mind. Up to this time he himself thinks of God as a material *corpus*. This opinion is expressed in the original Manichaeans' question when he first encountered them in *conf.* 3,12: 'Is God limited by a bodily shape (*forma corporea*)?' and, for instance, by 'not in the shape of the human body' in *conf.* 7,1. But in *conf.* 7,1 it is also said that, because of that 'bodily shape', 'I felt forced to imagine something corporeal (*corporeum aliquid*), occupying space (*per spatia locorum*) diffused either in the world or even through infinite space outside the world'. This applies to all *corpora*, and so also to God.

However, in *conf.* 7,2 one discovers that Augustine identifies an opportunity for a shift in his thinking and reasoning, namely the opinion (as stated by Plotinus in his famous tractates *On the Presence of Being, One and the Same, Everywhere as a Whole*)⁸¹ that not all *corpora* occupy space: 'I did not see that the mental power (*intentio*) by which I formed these images (*imagines*) does not occupy any space'. For this reasoning in general, and the term *intentio* (*dynamis*) in particular, one may compare Plotinus' speaking in *Enn.* 6,4,7 ff.⁸²

It should be noted as very curious that, before gaining this insight, Augustine was a sort of panentheist for a while. He literally says, as quoted above from *conf.* 7,2:

I conceived even of You, life of my life, as a colossal being, permeating infinite space on every side (*grandem per infinita spatia undique*), penetrating the entire mass of the world (*penetrare totam mundi molem*), and outside this extending in all directions for immense distances without end. So the earth had You, the heaven had You, all things had You, they would reach their limit in You, but You would have no limit.

Similar panentheistic ideas will be encountered in a moment in *conf.* 7,7 when Augustine says that he imagined God as infinite while surrounding and permeating the mass (*massa*) of the earth.

Before reaching the final stage of his quest for a correct conceptual idea of God, Augustine had gone the way from anthropomorphic-spatial thinking to corporeal-spatial thinking. He discovered, however, that this corporeal-spatial concept had its limitations. Even though he did not want to say with the Manichaeans that God was limited on one side by evil, but strongly believed that God is unlimited, he still thought Him to be a *corpus*, 'occupying space diffused either in the world or even through infinite space outside the world' (*conf.* 7,1).

81 See e.g. Plotinus, *Ennead vi. 1-5 with an English Translation by A.H. Armstrong* (Loeb 445), Cambridge, Mass.-London, England: Harvard University Press 1988, 274-359.

82 Plotinus, *Enn.* 6,4,7 ff. in Loeb 445, 292 ff.

But how can a *corpus* such as God be omnipresent? The solution to this problem already lights up a bit in *conf.* 7,2, but more complete and clearer in 7,3 and finally—after he has reported his making acquaintance with the books of the Platonists—most evident in *conf.* 7,20 ff. By then he has made a most incisive discovery: there are two distinct orders of reality: this physical world and the higher intelligible world, the higher realm which is non-corporeal, non-spatial, omnipresent in all things *entirely* (and not in parts). This intelligible world is of another order, another *táxis*. With Plotinus' *Enn.* 6 one may compare it to light, or fire, or the soul: they are present everywhere, non-corporeal, non-spatial, not diminishing when present in something. As Augustine already says it in *conf.* 3,12: this presence is '*tota ubique sicut spiritus, sicut deus*: everywhere entire as spirit is, as God is'. He seems to have learned this from Plotinus who e.g. in *Enn.* 6,4,4 speaks of '*hólè pantachou*: entire everywhere'.⁸³

We should be clearly aware of the fact that Augustine describes the development of his thinking about God from anthropomorphic-spatial to corporeal-spatial, and then God as being omnipresent in all things entirely and '*manens in se*: abiding in Himself',⁸⁴ *in retrospection*. By and then he is weaving Plotinian thoughts into his descriptions before he is introduced to 'the books of the Platonists' in *conf.* 7,13. The same we see in *conf.* 7,7 where it runs:⁸⁵

And I sought *unde malum*: 'whence is evil?'⁸⁶ And I sought in an evil way; nor saw the evil in my very search. I set in order before the view of my spirit the entire creation, all that we can perceive in it, earth, sea, air, stars, trees, living creatures; and whatever in it we do not see, as the firmament of heaven, all the angels, too, and all its spiritual inhabitants. But I imagined these beings to be like bodies (*corpora*) which are allocated to particular places. I conceived your creation as one distinct vast mass (*massa grandem distinctam*) differentiated by various types of bodies—whether they were real bodies or whether the bodies with which my imagination invested the spirits. And this mass (*massa*) I made huge,—not as it was, which I could not know, but as large as I thought well, but on every side finite. I imagined You, Lord, surrounding it on all sides and permeating it,

83 Plotinus, *Enn.* 6,4,4 l. 33 in Loeb 445, 286.

84 *Conf.* 7,11 (CCL 27,100).

85 *Conf.* 7,7 (CCL 27,96).

86 The old Manichaean question, for Augustine still topical and closely associated with his search for God.

but infinite in all directions, as if there were a sea everywhere and stretching through immense distances, a single sea which had within it a large but finite sponge (*spongia*); and the sponge was on every part filled by the immense sea. So I conceived Your finite creation to be full of You, infinite as You are. And I said: *Ecce Deus*: Look, this is God, and see what God has created. God is good and is most highly and incomparably superior to these things. See, how God surrounds and fills them. Then, where and whence is evil ...?

There has been (and still is) much speculation about *which* philosophical ideas are expressed in all this reasoning in Book 7.⁸⁷ Whether Augustine learned most for his 'spiritual' concept of God from Plotinus' *Enneads* or (also) from Porphyry⁸⁸ does not need to concern us in detail here. It is clear that (Neo-)Platonic ideas led him to his new insights; after all, that is what he emphatically says himself.⁸⁹

Yet it was *Manichaean* material and bodily-spatial opinion that had to be especially overcome on the long way of his quest: it is with *their* manner of thinking that he argues repeatedly and even emphatically until the very end of his spiritual development. It should not be ruled out that Stoic ideas also played a role. Augustine was very familiar with Cicero, e.g. with his *On the Nature of the Gods* (*De natura deorum*) and also with Pliny, among others.⁹⁰ He may also have temporarily obtained his materialistic view of God from these famous classical

87 Just to illustrate in a 'detail' how much opinions may differ: O'Connell, 'Ennead VI, 4 and 5 in the Works of Saint Augustine' (n. 57), 10 n. 36 suggests Plotinus' thinking for the image of the 'sponge'; Ch. Baguette, 'Une période stoïcienne dans l'évolution de la pensée de saint Augustin', *REA* 16 (1970) 60 and n. 39 suggests 'la tradition stoïcienne' for the same image.

88 See e.g. W. Theiler, *Porphyrios und Augustin*, Halle: M. Niemeyer 1933; P. Henry, *Plotin et l'Occident. Firmicus Maternus, Marius Victorinus, saint Augustin et Macrobe*, Louvain: Specilegium Sacrum Lovaniense 1934; *idem*, *La Vision d'Ostie. Sa place dans la Vie et l'Œuvre de saint Augustin*, Paris: Vrin 1938; J.J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine. An Introduction to the Confessions of St Augustine*, London-New York: Longman 1980, 133-155 (first published as *The Young Augustine. The Growth of St Augustine's Mind up to his Conversion*, London: Longman, Green 1954) and *idem*, 'Augustine and Neo-platonism', *RA* 1 (1958) 91-111 (96 ff.); O'Connell, 'Ennead VI, 4 and 5 in the Works of Saint Augustine' (n. 57); etc.

89 Cf. *conf.* 7,13,26; 8,3.

90 M. Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron*, 1-11, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1958; Baguette, 'Une période stoïcienne dans l'évolution de la pensée de saint Augustin' (n. 87), 47-77. Cf. e.g. H. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 1-11, Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis 1967: testimonia for *De natura deorum* collected in I, 96-110; for Plinius Maior, *Naturalis historia* in I, 219-222.

writers.⁹¹ But Stoic influence should not be exaggerated: what was once thought to be Stoic appears to be rather Manichaeic.

A last passage should be briefly discussed because it may be regarded as a final and climax of his quest. What is reported here is sometimes referred to as a (first but unsuccessful) mystical experience. In *conf.* 7,16 it runs:

And being thence⁹² admonished to return to myself, I entered into my innermost self, You being my guide. And I was able to do it, for You had become my helper.⁹³ I entered and saw, with the eye of my soul (*oculo animae meae*) such as it was, above that same eye of my soul (*anima*), above my mind (*mens*), the unchangeable Light (*lucem incommutabilem*). It was not this common light, which all flesh can see, nor as it were a grander one of the same sort, as though the brightness of this should be much more resplendent and with its greatness fill up all things. That light was not like this ordinary light, but different, very different from all our kinds of light. It transcended my mind (*mens*), not in the way as oil is above water, nor as heaven is above earth. It was superior because it made me, and I inferior because I was made by it. One who knows the truth knows it; and one who knows it knows eternity. Love knows it. O eternal truth, and true love, and loved eternity!⁹⁴ You are my God;⁹⁵ to You do I sigh night and day.⁹⁶ When I first came to know You, You lifted me up,⁹⁷ to let me see there was that which I might see,⁹⁸ and that yet it was not I that did see. And You did beat back the weakness of my sight, pouring forth upon me most strongly Your beams of light, and I trembled with

91 As far as I have discovered, there may have been 'Stoic' influence via Cicero or some other authors of eclectic works such as ancient doxographies. However, any reference to Pliny, *Naturalis historia*, Book 2, as Baguette, 'Une période stoïcienne', 76 tries to adduce, seems superfluous because all (possible!) 'Stoic' influence on Augustine's quest for a correct concept of God seems to come via Cicero. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 219–222 only knows of some Augustinian testimonials for *Nat. hist.*, Book 7. Cf. Hagendahl, 671: 'Each and all of the borrowings from Pliny (...) go back to Book VII. (...) I'm inclined to think that Augustine used this book alone'.

92 Sc. by the books of the Platonists.

93 Cf. Ps. 29 (Hebr. 30):11.

94 For Du Roy, *Intelligence* (n. 40), 74 and n. 3 (cf. 437: 'Table des triades') a 'trinitarian designation'.

95 Cf. e.g. Ps. 42 (Hebr. 43):2.

96 Cf. e.g. Ps. 1:2; Jer. 9:1.

97 Cf. Ps. 26 (Hebr. 27):10.

98 I.e., God as the ultimate Being.

love and fear; and I found myself to be far off from You, in the region of dissimilarity (*in regione dissimilitudinis*) ...

Much has been written about this episode and many references have been made to passages from Plotinus' *Enneads*;⁹⁹ not least the 'region of dissimilarity' (*regio dissimilitudinis*) has been the subject of many studies.¹⁰⁰ I will not go into the ongoing discussion, but only note that (Neo-)Platonic ideas did indeed lead Augustine to his spiritual understanding of God. To what extent Neoplatonic speaking about a triad or trinitas (e.g. Plotinus' the One, *to hen*; the Intellect, *ho nous*; the Soul, *he psychè*) has also been decisive for Augustine's speaking of Trinity may remain an open question here. I only mention that in the studies of (the sources of) Augustine's doctrine of Trinity, the Manichaeans' evident views of Trinity¹⁰¹ have not been thoroughly explored until now.

6 Conclusions

Our conclusions may be brief. Augustine took a breath-taking journey in developing his understanding of God. This is without a doubt a main theme of the *Confessions*. The fact that Neoplatonism had such a vital place in his ultimate discovery of God as a spiritual (and trinitarian) being may still surprise, though later in his career Augustine time and again tried to substantiate his newly acquired insights with biblical notions and texts. A very modern feature of his quest for an intellectually acceptable concept of God is its inextricable link to the problem of evil. The question '*unde malum?*' brought him to the Manichaeans; essential aspects of their thinking about God resonate in the *Confessions* from beginning to end.

99 Cf. e.g. Courcelle, *Recherches* (n. 13), 160–164.

100 E.g. É. Gilson, "Regio dissimilitudinis" de Platon à Saint Bernard de Clairvaux, *Mediaeval Studies* 9 (1947) 108–130. Cf. e.g. A.-I. Bouton-Touboul, 'Regio dissimilitudinis', *AL* 4 (2012–2018) 111–112.

101 See already *conf.* 3,10 (*CCL* 27,31): the Manichaeans spoke to Augustine about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit. Cf. e.g. the texts and discussions of Manichaean triads/trinities in E. Rose, *Die manichäische Christologie*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1979.

Augustine's Conversion (*conf.* 8,13–30)

1 Introduction

*Much has been written about the event commonly known as 'Augustine's Conversion'. Accordingly, it could seem audacity rather than scientific acumen when writing about it again. Yet I believe there are novel and even essential data to be reviewed. In this chapter, I especially want to bring original insights from the nowadays significantly developed 'Manichaeology' into the scholarly discussion. I hope this will not be seen as an attempt to replace a one-sided earlier paradigm (i.e., Augustine's conversion was caused by his introduction to Neoplatonic texts, in essence making him a Christian Neoplatonist) with another one-sided paradigm, namely that Augustine's 386 conversion as told by him in his *Confessions* should only be seen as the Manichaean-determined change of a former Manichaean Christian to a full-fledged biblical and Nicene Christian. In my view the influence of Neoplatonism in Augustine's conversion story should in no way be underestimated; just as, in my opinion, one should not underestimate the essential presence of Manichaeism in Augustine's *narratio*. It is my intention to highlight this latter point here; as far as I can see, such an approach has not been applied before.

1.1 *Brief Survey of Previous Research*

Generally speaking, the critical study of 'Augustine's conversion' began with the investigations of Adolf Harnack¹ and Gaston Boissier;² they are known to point out the (in their view, large) discrepancy between Augustine's story as presented in *conf.* 8 and what could be concluded from the Cassiciacum dialogues and some other early writings. According to them, the Milanese conversion was essentially a turn towards Neoplatonism and not to orthodox Christianity as suggested in the *Confessiones*. For the following decades, Boissier and Harnack set the critical tone.

It deserves special mention that the great scholar of Manichaeism, Prosper Alfarc, drew a corresponding picture in his book *L'Évolution intellectuelle de*

* A concise version of this study first appeared as 'A New Reading of Augustine's Conversion Story', *REA* 68 (2022) 45–100.

1 A. Harnack, *Augustins Confessionen*, Giessen: J. Ricker'sche Buchhandlung 1888¹.

2 G. Boissier, 'La conversion de saint Augustin', *Revue des deux mondes* 85 (1888) 43–69.

saint Augustin.³ In his opinion, Neoplatonism played such an essential role in Augustine's conversion that, at first, he became nothing more than a Neoplatonic Christian or, rather, a Christian Neoplatonist. In his 'Préface', Alfarc distinguished three phases in Augustine's spiritual development: from the age of 19 until 34, he was the Manichaean who transitioned to Neoplatonism; from the age of 34 until 46, he was the Neoplatonist who gradually became a Catholic; and from the age of 46 to the end of his life, he was the Catholic who ended in rigorous Augustinianism.⁴ According to Alfarc, '[m]oralement comme intellectuellement c'est au Néoplatonisme qu'il s'est converti, plutôt qu'à l'Évangile';⁵ 'Augustin lui-même se présente dans ses premiers écrits comme un « Platonicien »'.⁶ In brief, '[e]n lui le Chrétien disparaît derrière le disciple de Plotin'.⁷ It is noticeable that Alfarc only briefly (and very sceptically) discusses the events in Milan and that he does not elaborate on the role of Manichaeism.⁸

Others who wrote more extensively about the Milanese episode also highlighted the preceding influence of Neoplatonic writings and did not comment on a possible role of Manichaeism. In a number of minute studies, Paul Henry attempted to determine the exact impact of Neoplatonism in Augustine's conversion; his conclusion was that the young convert must have known Plotinus' tractate *Perì tou kaloû* (I,6) and almost certainly the tractate *Perì tōn triōn archikōn hypostaseōn* (v,1).⁹ Other scholars argued that Porphyry's *De regressu animae* probably also belonged to these 'Platonic' writings read by Augustine prior to his conversion.¹⁰ Pierre Courcelle, in his well-known and still very valuable *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, arrived at the same

3 P. Alfarc, *L'Évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin*, I, *Du Manichéisme au Néoplatonisme*, Paris: Émile Nourry 1918.

4 Alfarc, *L'Évolution*, viii–ix.

5 Alfarc, *L'Évolution*, 399.

6 Alfarc, *L'Évolution*, 515.

7 His conclusion at the end of the volume, *L'Évolution*, 527.

8 Alfarc, *L'Évolution*, 392–394.

9 P. Henry, *Plotin et l'Occident. Firmicus Maternus, Marius Victorinus, saint Augustin et Macrobe*, Louvain: Specilegium Sacrum Lovaniense 1934, e.g. his conclusion on p. 128. Cf. e.g. P. Henry, *La Vision d'Ostie. Sa place dans la Vie et l'Œuvre de saint Augustin*, Paris: Vrin 1938, 17: 'Parmi ces *paucissimi libri* [sc. Plotini, as mentioned in *b. vita* 4] figurait très probablement celui *Sur les trois hypostases principales* (*Enn.*, v, 1) et certainement celui *Sur le beau* (*Enn.*, i, 6)'.
 10 E.g. P. Courcelle, *Les lettres grecques en Occident, de Macrobe à Cassiodore*, Paris: De Boccard 1948², 161–168. Cf. (also for more possibilities) J.J. O'Meara, *The Young Augustine. An Introduction to the Confessions of St Augustine*, London-New York: Longman Higher Education 1980, 133–155 (first published as *The Young Augustine. The Growth of St Augustine's Mind up to his Conversion*, London: Longmans & Green 1954) and *idem*, 'Augustine and Neo-platonism', *RA* 1 (1958) 91–111 (96 ff.).

conclusion;¹¹ he also referred to Plotinus' tractate *Perì toû tína kaí pothén tà kaká* (I, 8).¹²

Generally speaking, these are—with some additions, i.e., mainly references to an early and more extensive knowledge of Porphyry—the conclusions shared to this day.¹³ It is conspicuous that none of these studies discusses the possible influence of Manichaeism on Augustine's 386 conversion as told in *conf.* 8 and the circumstances leading to the decisive event. Even Jason BeDuhn, in the two volumes published so far of his projected trilogy *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, does not expand upon any special influence of Mani in the story of the Milanese episode.¹⁴ When appropriate, some notable comments he and others made concerning our subject will be mentioned in the course of this chapter.

1.2 *Structure of the Chapter*

To approach our topic as precisely as possible, we explore the following:

(A) Where in his conversion story does Augustine more or less explicitly mention Manichaeism? This section will be limited to tracing and briefly commenting on the relevant texts.

(B) Where in his conversion story does he bring up Mani and his teachings implicitly? This second category of data will be particularly interesting, because here some details can be highlighted that have not previously been discussed as being inspired by typical Manichaean terms and concepts. Special attention will be paid to the introductory confession at the beginning of the conversion *narratio* proper and the role of Ponticianus; to the still mysterious voice that sounds (or seems to sound) in the garden of Milan; to the words this voice produces; to the detail that this voice is attributed—though hypothetically and undecided: *quasi ... nescio!*—to a boy or a girl; to the obvious fact that the voice incites to radical asceticism; and to the roles assigned to Augustine's tears, the

11 P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, Paris: É. de Boccard 1950 (1968²), e.g. 157.

12 Courcelle, *Recherches*, e.g. 167.

13 Cf. e.g. M. Erler, 'Platonorum libri', *AL* 4 (2012–2018) 762–764 and (though probably overly influenced by the studies of O'Meara and even the much-disputed one by Theiler) A. Smith, 'Plotinus'; 'Porphyrius', *ibidem*, 772–774 and 795–804. Still valuable, in my opinion, is the balanced assessment by J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine*, Confessions, II, *Commentary on Books 1–7*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1992, 421–424.

14 J.D. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, 1: *Conversion and Apostasy, 373–388 C.E.*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2010; 2: *Making a 'Catholic' Self, 388–401 C.E.*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2013. See e.g. the chapter 'Conversion' in vol. 1, 193–217.

fig tree and, for instance, his mother. In this section we will also consider the special import given in the narrative to the Pauline writings, *Romans* in particular. What does it mean for Augustine's conversion that the apostle Paul had special authority among the Manichaeans?

The place of Paul's writings in the whole event is certainly also a reason why we should identify the story of Augustine's conversion broadly: it is not just about what is told in the last three paragraphs of book 8 (ergo: *conf.* 8,28–30), or in the long *narratio* of *conf.* 8,13–30,¹⁵ but in fact comprises the whole of book 8 with even digressions to book 7 and book 9 in which passages from the corpus Paulinum play a special role.

2 A: Manichaeism Explicitly Mentioned in Augustine's Conversion Story

Already a superficial reading of *conf.* 7 makes it clear that during the described events—Augustine has been in Milan for some time—Manichaean questions and problems still determine his thinking. He conceives of God as something corporeal spread through the unlimited space, while issues typically raised by Manichaeism such as the deity's incorruptibility, inviolability and immutability play an important role in this perception (*conf.* 7,1–2 ff.);¹⁶ the same goes for the here (and in many of Augustine's later writings) important reasoning by Nebridius against the Manichaeans (*conf.* 7,3); and also for the recurrent discussion of the *causa mali*, i.e., the argument about the pivotal Manichaean question: *unde malum?* (*conf.* 7,4.6 ff.); etc. The books of the Platonists provide liberating insight (*conf.* 7,13.17–19), and it even comes to a first ecstasy (*conf.* 7,16), but the Manichaean questions return unabated (e.g. *conf.* 7,20). Book 7 ends with the mention of a (renewed!) reading of the apostle Paul: 'all the difficulties *I once had* [*sc. as a Manichaean*] when it seemed to me that he contradicted himself and the tenor¹⁷ of his discourse did not correspond with

15 Cf. e.g. A. Sizoo, 'Augustinus' bekeringsverhaal als narratio', *Aug(L)* 4 (1954) 240–257, who emphasizes (245 ff.) Augustine's speaking of '*narrabo*' at the beginning of *conf.* 8,13.

16 Although Stoic and other (mainly eclectic, e.g. via Cicero) representations may also be under discussion here (cf. e.g. Ch. Baguette, 'Une période stoïcienne dans l'évolution de la pensée de saint Augustin', *REA* 16 (1970) 47–77), the main issues have been raised by Manichaean problems such as God's (*in*)*corruptibilitas*, (*in*)*uiolabilitas*, (*in*)*commutabilitas* and—not least—corporeality. See also this book's ch. 6: "God" in Augustine's Confessions'.

17 Cf. A. Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens. Revu spécialement pour le*

the testimonies of the Law and the Prophets, simply vanished' (*conf.* 7,27).¹⁸ In short, Augustine now reads, in an anti-Manichaean fashion, not only a different Paul but also Paul differently.

Much of this we also encounter in Book 8. Immediately after the first sentences, Augustine refers to the fact that he used to doubt 'that there was an incorruptible substance, and that every substance comes from this'.¹⁹ This is a clear reference to his former Manichaean idea of God,²⁰ just as the statement that 'my heart still needed to be cleansed of the old leaven'²¹ alludes to his past heretical thinking. In the following paragraph 'the *vain* men in whom there is no knowledge of God' and who 'from the good things that are seen cannot find Him who is', are almost certainly the Manichaeans.²² The story about Victorinus told by Simplicianus does not give any direct reason to speak about his previous co-religionists and their ideas, but scattered remarks such as 'For You always remain the same'²³ and 'nowhere do You withdraw'²⁴ seem to be directed against them. They very emphatically appear on the scene when the tremendous inner conflict (caused by two *uoluntates*) is described following²⁵ Ponticianus' story about the two courtiers in Trier: while the narrative of Augustine's conversion is nearing its peak, the reader comes across no less than seven paragraphs (i.e., over 1350 Latin words!) in which the struggle of the

vocabulaire théologique par H. Chirat, Turnhout: Brepols 1954, 815 s.v. 'textus', 3: 'suite (d'un discours), texte, teneur (postcl.): *t. sermonis eius (Platonis)* [read: (*Pauli*)!], *AVG. Conf.* 7, 21, 27'.

18 *Conf.* 7,27 (*CCL* 27,110): '... et perierunt illae quaestiones, in quibus mihi aliquando uisus est aduersari sibi et non congruere testimoniis legis et prophetarum textus sermonis eius ...'.

19 *Conf.* 8,1 (*CCL* 27,113): '... dubitatio tamen omnis de incorruptibili substantia, quod ab illa esset omnis substantia ...'.

20 Cf. e.g. *conf.* 3,12 and 7,1 for the Manichaean concept of God as a huge *corpus* consisting of light *substantia*. In Manichaean thought all other substance does not automatically derive from God but has been created (or rather: 'called forth') by the Living Spirit.

21 *Conf.* 8,1 (*CCL* 27,113): '... et mundandum erat cor a fermento ueteri ...'. Cf. 1 Cor. 5:7.

22 *Conf.* 8,2 (*CCL* 27,114): 'Vani sunt certe omnes homines, quibus non inest dei scientia, nec de his, quae uidentur bona, potuerunt inuenire eum, qui est. At ego iam non eram in illa uanitate ...'.

23 *Conf.* 8,6 (*CCL* 27,117): 'Nam tu semper idem ...'.

24 *Conf.* 8,8 (*CCL* 27,118): 'Et nusquam recedis ...'.

25 Strictly speaking, his description of the conflict of two *uoluntates* already starts after he has heard Victorinus' example (cf. *conf.* 8,10 [*CCL* 27,120]: 'Ita duae uoluntates meae, una uetus, alia noua, illa carnalis, illa spiritalis, confligebant inter se atque discordando dissipabant animam meam'), but neither here nor in the following paragraphs does he explicitly use his explanation inspired by Pauline texts against the Manichaeans.

two *uoluntates* is thematized.²⁶ It becomes crystal clear to whom all these considerations are aimed: “Let them perish from Your presence”, o God, as “*vain talkers and deceivers*” of the mind do perish who—once they have perceived that there are two wills in deliberating—assert that there are two natures of two minds, one good, the other evil.²⁷

Our ensuing analysis of some topics will disclose how central to the story of Augustine's conversion the Manichaeans are, as they are so often central to other parts of his *Confessiones*.²⁸ Here it may also be noted as a special fact that they are *directly* addressed in Augustine's deliberations: ‘Give heed to what you are saying²⁹ and blush, and come to Him and be illuminated, and your faces will not blush.’³⁰ One may compare this direct speaking to the Manichaeans with the striking change from past to present tense we find in *conf.* 9,9, where they are addressed as his immediate contemporaries.³¹ In concert with much other data, these striking stylistic facts may show how much Augustine considered his entire work as *also*—and certainly not least—addressed to his former co-religionists.

The fact that Augustine viewed the Manichaeans as his actual readers may help us better understand typical traits and events of his conversion story. I now concentrate primarily on the conversion *narratio* in its strict rhetorical sense, i.e., *conf.* 8,13–30. After our analyses, the broader context of the account will be briefly considered again.

26 *Conf.* 8,21–27 (CCL 27,126–130).

27 *Conf.* 8,22 (CCL 27,127): ‘Pereant a facie tua, deus, sicuti pereunt, uaniloqui et mentis seductores, qui cum duas uoluntates in deliberando animaduenterint, duas naturas duarum mentium esse asseuerant, unam bonam, alteram malam’. Apart from the two biblical quotes that resound here (Ps. 67:3 [Heb. 68:2] and Tit. 1:10), the terms ‘uaniloqui’ and ‘mentis seductores’ deserve special attention. Cf. for ‘uaniloqui’ *conf.* 3,10; 4,10; 5,20 etc. as well as *conf.* 8,2 quoted above; for the Manichaeans as ‘seductores’ and their manners as seductive, e.g. *conf.* 3,21; 4,1; 5,11; 6,12 and, of course, their first appearance in the narrative in *conf.* 3,10 ff. as speaking ‘falsa’.

28 See e.g. the preceding and following chapters in this book, as well as several chapters in my *Mani and Augustine. Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2020 (repr. 2023).

29 This ‘saying’ refers first to what has just been reported as their opinion: ‘putando animae naturam hoc esse, quod deus est’: ‘they hold that the nature of the soul is what God is’.

30 *Conf.* 8,22 (CCL 27,127): ‘Attendite, quid dicatis, et erubescite et accedite ad eum et inluminamini, et uultus uestri non erubescant’. For ‘erubescite ... erubescant’, cf. Ps. 33 (34):6.

31 *Conf.* 9,9 (CCL 27,138): ‘Quae utinam audissent qui adhuc usque diligunt uanitatem et quaerunt mendacium: forte conturbarentur et euomouissent illud ...’.

3 B: Manichaeism Implicitly Present in Augustine's Conversion Story

3.1 *Augustine's Introductory Confession (conf. 8,16) and Manichaean Confessional Practice*

First, it is noticeable that Augustine reports that—while hearing the story of Ponticianus about the conversion of Antonius and, in particular, of the two courtiers in Trier (*conf.* 8,14 ff.)—he is forced to admit his iniquity. In other words, he is inevitably led to some sort of confession. It seems appropriate to reproduce the telling passage (i.e., the full paragraph *conf.* 8,16) in its entirety:

Narrabat haec Ponticianus. Tu autem, domine, inter uerba eius retorquebas me ad me ipsum, auferens me a dorso meo, ubi me posueram, dum nollem me attendere, et constituebas me ante faciem meam, ut uiderem, quam turpis essem, quam distortus et sordidus, maculosus et ulcerosus. Et uidebam et horrebam, et quo a me fugerem non erat. Et si conabar auertere a me aspectum, narrabat ille quod narrabat, et tu me rursus opponebas mihi et impingebas me in oculos meos, ut inuenirem iniquitatem meam et odissem. Noueram eam, sed dissimulabam et cohibebam et obliuiscabar.³²

These things Ponticianus was telling. But You, Lord, turned me to myself during his words, dragging me away from behind my back where I had placed myself while unwilling to exercise self-scrutiny. And You set me before my face so that I could see how ugly I was, how deformed and filthy, polluted and ulcerous. And I saw and trembled, and there was nowhere to which I could escape from myself. And if I tried to turn the sight from me, he went on telling his tale, and You once again placed me in front of myself and you pressed me in my own eyes so that I should discover my iniquity and hate it. I knew it, but I was pretending I did not, suppressed it, and forgot it.

The first conspicuous element is Augustine's statement that he was taken by God from behind his back and placed before his own face 'so that I could see how ugly I was, how deformed and filthy, polluted and ulcerous'. For the last words, reference has been made to Seneca's *Dial.* 3 (*de ira*) in particular,³³ but this best classical 'echo' is at most weak. It is apparent, though, that this sen-

³² *Conf.* 8,16 (CCL 27,123–124).

³³ Cf. e.g. *Saint Augustine, Confessions*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by H. Chadwick, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1991 (many reprints), 144n; *Augustine, Con-*

tence contains references to Jer. 2:27 and especially Ps. 49 (Heb. 50): 21. But what in fact do the words mean: '*retorquebas me ad me ipsum*: You turned me to myself'? Their essence is apparently so important that it is repeated a little later: '*et tu me rursus opponebas mihi et impingebas me in oculos meos, ut inuenirem iniquitatem et odissem*: and You once again placed me in front of myself and you pressed me (i.e., my horrible image) in my own eyes so that I should discover my iniquity and hate it.'³⁴

Until now, this passage has received minimal notice in the study of Augustine's conversion. However, it seems to me a very essential passage, which will have particularly caught the attention of his (ex-) Manichaean readers. Augustine is here on his way to a radical and profound confession of his sins: he has come to stand in front of a mirror, as it were, 'in front of myself', 'in front of my own eyes', and is thus forced to face his miserable condition. Self-scrutiny is necessary to find out how 'deformed and filthy, polluted, and ulcerous' he was, and he 'saw and trembled'.

Following in the footsteps of the Jewish religion, the confession of sins has occupied an important place in Christianity from its very beginning. Also in the early centuries of the Christian church, contrition, confessional repentance, and forgiveness were important parts of its life and liturgy.³⁵ Nowhere in the various Christian traditions, however, and perhaps not in other religions as even in Buddhism, does the sense of sin appear so much developed and even cultivated as in the gnostic church of Mani. The life of the believer—both the life of the Auditor and the Elect—is filled with constant transgressions, especially against the divine Living Soul which is ubiquitous in matter. Certainly also because the Manichaean believers considered their material body—in accordance with Paul's word in Rom. 7:23–25—'a body of death' in which 'the law of sin' reigns, they knew they were deeply sinful.

This profound consciousness of sin is evident not least from the Manichaean confessional 'mirrors' handed down to us from Central Asia, i.e., in particular, a confessional form for laymen in Old Turkish entitled *Xwāstwānīft* (a Parthian word meaning 'confession')³⁶ and a confessional form for the Elect

fessions, Books 1–8. Edited and translated by C.J.-B. Hammond, Cambridge, Mass.-London: Harvard University Press 2014 (*LCL* 26), 386n. See also O'Donnell, *Commentary*, III, 43.

34 For 'inuenirem iniquitatem et odissem', cf. Ps. 35 (Heb. 36):3.

35 See e.g. B. Poschmann, *Die kirchliche Busse im ältesten Christentum bis Cyprian und Origenes*, Bonn: Peter Hanstein 1940; H. Edmunds, B. Poschmann, 'Buße', *RAC* 2 (1954) 802–814; C. Vogel, *Le pécheur et la pénitance dans l'Église ancienne*, Paris: Éditions du Cerf 1982; Ch. Munier, 'Indulgentia', *RAC* 18 (1998) 56–86.

36 J.P. Asmussen, *X'ŪĀSTVĀNĪFT. Studies in Manichaeism*, Copenhagen: Munksgaard 1965, esp. 167–239; L. Clark, *Uyğur Manichaean Texts. Texts, Translations, Commentary*, Vo-

in the mainly Sogdian Manichaean ‘Bet-und Beichtbuch’.³⁷ The first one spells out sins against the basic concepts of Manichaeism such as the belief in the two principles and the three times, the observance of ten commandments, and so on; the confession for the Elect, for example, records transgressions against five commandments such as ‘non-injury’ and offenses against the ‘collecting’ of the five ‘gates’ (i.e., the closing of the five senses).³⁸ Although these confessional mirrors appear to contain older material, in their partially surviving forms (and many parallel scraps) they mainly date from the ninth to tenth centuries CE; besides, such confessional forms have been handed down to us only from Eastern Manichaeism.

This certainly does not mean, however, that in Western Manichaeism ritual confession and its associated deep sense of sin were unknown. As elsewhere in Mani’s widespread church, the West celebrated the Bêma Festival and with it the annual confession of both the Auditors and the Elect. In addition, there were the more individual but also ritualized acts of confession and absolution associated with the Manichaean weekly assembly.³⁹ On Monday, the Auditors’ confession before the Elect took place, a custom prescribed in the *Xwāst-wānīft* as follows: ‘It is necessary that every Monday we should pray to God, religion, (and) the holy (pure) Electi to forgive our errors and our sins’.⁴⁰ A further impression of what was confessed during these Monday meetings is given

lume 11: *Liturgical Texts* (CFM, Series Turcica 11), Turnhout: Brepols 2013, 5–111 (esp. 89–93: ‘Translation of the Reading Text’).

37 W.B. Henning, *Ein manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch* (APAW.PH. 1936, Nr. 10), Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1937, repr. in *idem, Selected Papers*, 1, Téhéran-Liège: Bibliothèque Pahlavi & Leiden: Brill 1977, 417–557.

38 One may compare, among several other texts, Henning, *Bet- und Beichtbuch*, 37–38 (451–452) and the remarks of Chr. Reck, ‘*Gesegnet sei dieser Tag*’: *Manichäische Festtagshymnen. Edition der mittelpersischen und parthischen Sonntags-, Montags- und Bemahymnen*, Turnhout: Brepols 2004, esp. 39–40 and 117. For the Manichaean concept of the five senses, see e.g. the Coptic *Psalm-Book* (ed. Allberry, see n. 50) 150,22–26 and a passage in Mani’s (or Ps.-Mani’s) *Letter to Menoch* (in Augustine’s c. *Iul. op. imp.* 3,173). For its possible influence on Augustine’s *conf.* 10, see ch. 8 (esp. § 2.4: ‘God and the Five Senses’).

39 See e.g. J.D. BeDuhn, ‘The Manichaean Weekly Confession Ritual’, in A.D. DeConick a.o. (eds.), *Practicing Gnosis: Ritual, Magic, Theurgy and Liturgy in Nag Hammadi, Manichaean and Other Ancient Literature. Essays in Honor of Birger A. Pearson*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2013, 271–299.

40 Asmussen, *X^UĀSTVĀNĪFT*, XIII A (n. 36), 198. Cf. Clark, *Uygur Manichaean Texts*, 92: ‘It has been required every day of the Moon God (i.e., Mondays) to ask God, the doctrine, and the pure Elects to release our transgressions and our sins’. To be clear, *nom* (translated by Asmussen as ‘religion’ and by Clark as ‘doctrine’) means Mani’s religious community or church.

by the fairly recently edited Monday hymns.⁴¹ Although these, too, come from Eastern Manichaeism, it may well be possible that the practice of the Monday confession was also known in the West.⁴² Besides, it is certain that a frequent confession and remission of sins took place in connection with the daily sacred meal. In their gathering of this vegetarian meal, the Auditors were inevitably forced to hurt the Living Soul, and through the laying on of hands by the *electi*, they received forgiveness for it. We know the latter from an explicit mention by Augustine.⁴³ Augustine also reports that he himself took part in the Bêma Festival⁴⁴ and thus also participated in the (likely elaborate because annual) confession of sins.

Although much is still uncertain as to the exact course of the Manichaean confession rituals, it is certain that Augustine was well aware of them: as an Auditor taking care of the daily meal of the Elect, he must have confessed and received their absolution; as a participant in the Bêma Festival, he knew about the annual confession; possibly, as an Auditor seeking to make special progress in the sect,⁴⁵ he was a participant in other private confessional consultations that most likely took place between Auditors and Elect;⁴⁶ we might also assume that sometime in 373, when he joined the Manichaeans, this was accompanied by a detailed 'first confession' of his past sins.⁴⁷

When we consider the just quoted passage *conf.* 8,16 against this background, certain words and expressions (inconspicuous at first reading) take on a typical meaning. Augustine reports that he is set before his face 'so that I could see how ugly I was, how deformed and filthy, polluted, and ulcerous'. This is because of his *iniquitas*, in other words: his sins. It is striking how much in their surviving texts the Manichaeans' sense of sin caused by their iniquity is emphasized, and

41 Reck, *Manichäische Festtagshymnen* (n. 38), esp. 90–135.

42 Cf. e.g. G. Wurst, *Das Bêmafest der ägyptischen Manichäer*, Altenberge: Oros Verlag 1995, 31–32, with reference to a passage in one of the *Sarakōtōn Psalms* (ed. Allberry, 140, 19–24), which he translates as follows: 'O Tag der [...], / der [S]onntag [...], / die Erlösung der Katechumenen./O Mon[tag ...], / der Tag der Sündenvergebung, / das Leben für die Electi.'

43 *Ep.* 236,2 (*CSEL* 57, 254): '... sed ipsi auditores ante electos genua figunt, ut eis manus supplicibus inponantur non a solis presbyteris uel episcopis aut diaconis eorum sed a quibuslibet electis ...'.

44 *C. ep. fund.* 8 (*CSEL* 25, 203): 'hoc enim nobis erat in illa bematis celebritate gratissimum, quod pro pascha frequentabatur, quoniam uehementius desiderabamus illum diem festum subtracto alio, qui solebat esse dulcissimus'.

45 *Conf.* 5,13 (*CCL* 27,63): '... proficere in illa secta ...'. Cf. n. 87 below.

46 Cf. e.g. BeDuhn, 'Manichaean Weekly Confession Ritual' (n. 39).

47 Cf. BeDuhn, *Dilemma*, 1, 36–40, with interesting remarks on its possible vestiges in the notorious and very elaborated pear theft story of *conf.* 2,9–18.

- 20 Look upon thy beloved, o blessed (*makários*) one, pity thy
 children give to us the gift of the remission
 of sins our sins. Cross to us
illegible
- The judgment which was set (?) upon sinners
- 25 in it; for (*gár*) we are counted to thy family,
 we; o Paraclete, [thou art our] defence; turn thy face upon (?)
 the wounding which life to us.
- The day today, they that hear the judge (*krités*)
 in (?) The books of the laws (*nómos*) are set down
- 30 with him despise (*kataphroneîn*) seated (?)
 31, 32 *illegible*

I have reproduced here as accurately as possible the translation of Charles Allberry,⁵⁰ also indicating (as he usually did) the Greek words⁵¹ adopted in the rather defective Coptic original. New study of this Coptic original has meanwhile provided some clarification.⁵² But what matters to us was and still is clear in the text: at the Bêma Festival the Paraclete Mani is honoured and invoked; he has come as a judge who sits on his judgement seat, and those present who stand before his Bêma and gaze on him *tremble*; they implore that Mani will turn his face to them and forgive them their sins. It is noticeable that in this passage both the noun and the verb 'tremble' (*strtr*) are mentioned: 'The **tremble** seized our limbs'; 'they all **tremble** as they stand and look at you'.

This aspect recalls Augustine's seeing of his distorted condition. In the Psalm it is Mani who—as representative of Christ in the final judgment—has sat down on the Bêma and looks at his believers, who are looking up to him and tremble at his judgment; in *conf.* 8,16 it is God before whom Augustine is, who turns (*retorquebas*) him toward himself, places (*constituebas*) him before his own face, and places the *trembling* Augustine again (*rursus opponebas*) before it. In both cases this is to face one's own sins.

Also, as there is no escape (*et quo a me fugerem non erat*) from this becoming aware of his sins in Augustine's passage, the same is emphasized in the Bêma

50 A *Manichaean Psalm-Book*, Part II, edited by C.R.C. Allberry, with a Contribution by H. Ibscher (*Manichaean Manuscripts in the Chester Beatty Collection*, Volume II), Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1939, 29.

51 Twice I supplemented *paráklētos*.

52 G. Wurst (ed., tr.), *The Manichaean Coptic Papyri in the Chester Beatty Library: Psalm Book*, Part. II, Fasc. 1, *Die Bêma-Psalmen* (CFM, Series Coptica I, Pars II,1), Turnhout: Brepols 1996, 78–79 who clearly translates with 'zittern'; cf. *idem*, *Bêmafest* (n. 42), 205–206: 'zittern'.

Psalm: ‘... so that you will judge *everyone* from it [sc. the Bêma] ...’;⁵³ ‘*who among men* shall be able to endure ...’; ‘they are *all* confounded’.

Certainly no less important is that the Psalm repeatedly states that the faithful ‘are gazing (*iarme*) on you’ [sc. Mani] and that he is implored: ‘look upon them’; ‘lift thy face (*ho*), forbear, lift not thy face (*ho*)’, i.e. do not turn it away. In *conf.* 8,16 Augustine is not only repeatedly placed before his own face: he becomes aware of his deformity through this sight (*aspectus*), trembles, and tries to avert the view.

The language and images remind one of what the Bêma Psalm expresses and the purpose of all this is—as in the Psalm—that he would confess and thus receive forgiveness: ‘Look upon thy beloved, o blessed (*makários*) one, pity thy / children [...] give to us the gift of the remission / of sins [...] our sins. Cross [i.e., turn thy face] to us (...) turn thy face upon / the wounding which [...] life to us’.

The phenomenon of the wounding (*šōce*) may be considered separately. In nearly all surviving Manichaean texts Mani is described and invoked as the Physician who heals the sin-caused wounds of his believers. The image of the divine Physician has always been well known in many religions and is certainly also biblical: God heals; Christ is the Physician. But perhaps nowhere do we find this metaphor as emphasized as in Manichaeism.⁵⁴ Not least in the *Bêma Psalms* it is Jesus/Christ who heals; the Light Mind who heals; Mani as Jesus’ deputy and Paraclete who heals:

Lo, the] great physician (*seïne*) has come: he knows how to heal all
men.

He has] spread his medicine-chest, he has called out: ‘He that wishes,
be cured.’

5 Look at the multitude of his cures: there is no cure save
in him.

He does not recoil (*sicháínesthai*) from him that is sick, he does not
mock him that has a
wound in him.

A skilful one is he in his work: his mouth also is sweet in [its
10 words.

He knows how to cut a **wound**, to put a cool medicament upon it.
He cuts and he cleanses; he cauterises and soothes (?) in a
single day.

53 My translation of 29,12–13.

54 See e.g. W.B. Oerter, ‘Mani als Arzt? Zur Bedeutung eines manichäischen Bildes’, in Vl. Vavrinek (ed.), *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium*, Prague: Academia 1985, 219–223.

Look, his loving kindness has made each one of us
 15 reveal his sickness.
 Let us not hide our sickness from him and leave the cancer
 in our members (*mélos*) ... Etc.¹⁵⁵

This fully matches our quoted *Bêma Psalm* 232: 'turn thy face upon the **wound-
 ing** which [turn will cause the?] life to us'. And, moreover, it seems to fully coin-
 cide with *conf.* 3,16: the deformed, filthy, tainted, and sore-covered Augustine
 seeks (or rather, at this stage of the *narratio*, should go to seek) God's healing
 of his sins.

Only when we compare with the Manichaean confession ritual in general
 and that of the *Bêma* Feast in particular, we can give a likely place and rationale
 to the (at first sight) very exaggerated words and typical images of Augustine.
 Neither from the Christian tradition that preceded him, nor from the writings
 of his contemporaries, or more specifically from the penitential and baptismal
 rites in Roman Africa, do I know of such a radical and very visual-corporeal
 sense of sin. In a moment we will come across a few more cases that first and
 foremost seem to refer to Manichaean examples.

3.2 *The Role of Ponticianus (conf. 8,14–18) and the Manichaean xweštr/xwēštar*

Yet something else first merits our special attention: the place and function of
 Ponticianus. In our passage—but also earlier and in what follows—he seems
 to fulfill the role of a confessor. The confession is not addressed to him, but
 he is present when it begins and initiates it in a sense. At the beginning of the
 whole conversion *narratio*,⁵⁶ it runs that when he (a Christian and baptized
 believer)⁵⁷ had discovered that Augustine is reading a codex comprising Paul's
 writings, 'he smiled as he attentively looked at me, expressing his congratu-
 lations and wonder alike'.⁵⁸ Ponticianus has detected a Christian disposition, or

55 *Psalm of the Bêma* 241, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 46; cf. e.g. *Psalm of the Bêma* 219, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 2: 'Jesus, the Physician of the **wounded**, the Redeemer of the / living souls ...'; *Psalm of the Bêma* 239, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 40: 'The physician of souls, he is the Light-Mind (*noûs*); this / is the New Man: the burning medicines are the Commandments (*entolé*). / But the cool medicines, they are the forgiveness of sins: he / that would be healed, lo, of two kinds are the medicines of life'.

56 I.e., in *conf.* 8,13 ff.; cf. n. 15 above.

57 *Conf.* 8,14 (CCL 27,122): 'Christianus quippe et fidelis erat ...'.

58 *Ibidem*: 'Tum uero arridens meque intuens gratulatorie miratus est ...'. One may possibly also render: 'expressing his congratulations and *admiration* alike'.

at least an awakening inclination to (Catholic) Christianity: after all, Augustine has told him that he attaches 'the highest importance to those scriptures'.⁵⁹

Ponticianus apparently elaborates on this aspiration in his speech, which turns out to be a long drawn-out 'sermon' (*sermo*)⁶⁰ that should help further. His story about Antonius serves this purpose; no less the story of the friends in Trier who also opted for radical Christian asceticism. It may be noted that this long sermon-like speech is clearly in service of the broader and dual confessional purpose that Augustine mentions as the goal of his *narratio* right from the outset: 'I will now tell, and *confess* to Your name, Lord, my helper and my redeemer, how You delivered me from the chain of the desire for copulation, by which I was most firmly bound, and from the slavery of worldly affairs'.⁶¹

One may wonder how exactly the incitement to confession of sins took place at the Bêma Feast or on other Manichaean moments of confession, and who played a part in it and in what way. Much of this is still unclear. It is worth noting, however, that on a famous miniature from Turfan almost certainly representing a scene of the Bêma Feast⁶² a specific *xweštr* plays a fairly prominent role. His name is given as Māniyišō' and on his tunic one also reads the Sogdian inscription xw[y]štr, i.e., 'master', 'superior'. Walter Henning supposed he was an official ('Presbyter', 'Prediger') reading a confession form;⁶³ with reference to Henning, Henri-Charles Puech also mentions this possibility.⁶⁴ We may assume that at the Bêma Feast (and perhaps on other confessional occasions as well) certain officials such as Māniyišō'⁶⁵ spelled out the probable and possible sins of the *auditores* by using forms written in books.

59 *Ibid.*: 'Cui ego cum indicassem illis me scripturis curam maximam inpendere ...'.

60 *Ib.*: '... ortus est sermo ipso narrante ...'; '... inmoratus est in eo sermone ...'; 8,15 (*CCL* 27,122): 'Inde sermo eius deuolutus est ...'. And cf. also 8,15 (*CCL* 27,122): 'Pertendebat ille et loquebatur adhuc ...'; 8,16 (*CCL* 27,123–124): 'Narrabat haec Ponticianus ...'; '... inter uerba eius ...'; '... narrabat ille quod narrabat ...'.

61 *Conf* 8,13 (*CCL* 27,121): 'Et de uinculo quidem desiderii concubitus, quo artissimo tenebar, et saecularium negotiorum seruitute quemadmodum exemeris, narrabo et confitebor nomini tuo, domine, adiutor meus et redemptor meus'.

62 A. von Le Coq, *Die buddhistische Spätantike in Mittelasien*, II: *Die manichäischen Miniaturen*, Berlin: Dietrich Reimer/Ernst Vohsen 1923 (repr. Graz: Akademische Druck & Verlagsanstalt 1973), 8ba; H.-J. Klimkeit, *Manichaean Art and Calligraphy*, Leiden: E.J. Brill 1982, 33–34 (discussion) and Plate XIV; Zs. Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art in Berlin Collections* (*CFM*, Series Archaeologica et Iconographica 1), Turnhout: Brepols 2001, 71 (Plate of *MIK* III 4979 a,b verso) and 74–75 (discussion).

63 Henning, *Manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch*, 12 (426).

64 H.-Ch. Puech, *Sur le manichéisme et autres essais*, Paris: Civilisations du Sud 1979, 305–306. For the same *xweštr* office, cf. Puech, *ibidem*, 356, 379 and 386.

65 J.D. BeDuhn, in 'Appendix 1' in Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art*, 226, reads his tunic inscription

Several years ago, Willy Bang published a Manichaean text in old-Turkish (T III D 260) in which a certain Aryaman-Fristum confesses his sins; in Bang's reading he is indicated as a *quštr*, which Bang translated with 'Lehrer'.⁶⁶ More recently, Annemarie von Gabain returned to this text and the said person. She reads his title as *qoštr*, states that this word is the equivalent of Sogdian *xwēštar* and also (as already did Henning)⁶⁷ refers to another text from Central Asia (M 481) which mentions a certain Rāymast fraزند who was also a *qoštr*.⁶⁸ It seems most likely to von Gabain that, in these latter cases, the *qoštr/xwēštar* was himself an Auditor appointed over other Auditors to lead them in the act of confession.⁶⁹

Whether the function was performed by an 'auditor' or an 'electus' may well remain an open question here. It could be possible that, in the Manichaean church, both (advanced) *auditores* as well as certain *electi* fulfilled the task. What may be remarked here is that Ponticianus' role in inciting to confession through his continuing *sermo* recalls such a *xwēštr*. Would it be entirely coincidental that Augustine mentions with some emphasis that he was not only a Christian, but also a 'believer' (*fidelis*, i.e., a baptized Christian) who, moreover, took his Christianity very seriously by repeated and long praying to God on his knees in church?⁷⁰ In short, Ponticianus (of whom we know nothing for cer-

somewhat differently and translates: 'Mānī Yišō, the Presbyter'. Cf. Le Coq, *Miniaturen* [n. 62], 54 for another slightly different reading.

66 W. Bang, 'Manichäische Erzähler', *Le Muséon* 45 (1931) 28. The fragments of this manuscript have since been assigned new U-numbers, with the confession text occurring on U103a–c, U104b, U84, U75 and U104a; for the latest edition with translation and commentary, see Clark, *Uyghur Manichaean Texts*, 11, *Liturgical Texts* (n. 36), 112–120.

67 Henning, *Manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch*, 12 (426).

68 A. von Gabain & W. Winter, *Türkische Turfantexte IX. Ein Hymnus an den Vater Mani auf 'Tocharisch' B mit alttürkischer Übersetzung*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1958, 5.

69 Von Gabain, *Türkische Turfantexte IX*, 5–6.

70 *Conf.* 8,14 (*CCL* 27,122): 'Christianus quippe et fidelis erat et saepe tibi, deo nostro, prosternebatur in ecclesia crebris et diuturnis orationibus'.—Of course '*fidelis*' could also connote 'true', 'faithful', etc. This might then make up a striking resemblance to a passage in an-Nadīm's *Fihrist*, translated and commented by G. Flügel (*Mani, seine Lehre und seine Schriften. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Manichäismus. Aus dem Fihrist des [...] an-Nadīm [...]*, Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus 1862, 95 and 296) and indicating that there was a fourth class of Manichaeans (standing just above the Auditors in rank) and referred to by an-Nadīm as 'the truthful', 'the faithful', 'the true ones'. In his commentary Flügel remarks: 'Die vierte Stufe haben die Wahrhaftigen oder die Söhne des Geheimnisses inne. Man sieht, dass diese Bezeichnung viel zu allgemein ist, als dass der Begriff der Wahrhaftigen ausschliesslich nur den Geistlichen zukäme. Es sind im allgemeinen die tiefer Eingeweihten, deren strengere Moral und geheimer Cultus sie völlig von der fünften Klasse, von der der Zuhörer oder den Söhnen der Einsicht schied und sie zu Candidaten oder Aspiranten für die geist-

tain apart from what Augustine tells in *conf.* 8,14–15) does not appear here as simply the narrator of exemplary stories, but as a Christian ‘superior’ who, with his sustained *sermo* held up to Augustine like a mirror, awakens to confession.

3.3 *Augustine’s ‘morbus concupiscentiae’ (conf. 8,17) and the Manichaean Āz*

One more point deserves our attention in this context. As we have seen, Ponticianus’ *sermo* is in the service of Augustine’s liberation ‘from the chain of the desire for copulation’ and ‘from the slavery of worldly affairs’. This is what Augustine states at the very beginning of his *narratio* and in its sequel it becomes clear how much he emphasizes the former, i.e., his sexual addiction.

It is worth noting that in the large confessional mirror for hearers from Central Asia entitled the *Xwāstwānīft*, we find this same dual orientation with its emphasis first and foremost on the sexual element. The text is too long to be reproduced in its entirety, but a few quotes from chapter xvc may suffice:

My God, we are encumbered with defect and sin, we are great debtors. Because of the insatiable and shameless Āz demon we in thought, word, and deed, likewise looking with Āz’s eyes, hearing with its ears, speaking with its tongue, seizing with its hands, and walking with its feet, incur constant and permanent agony on the light of the fivefold God in the dry and wet earth, the five kinds of living beings and the five kinds of herbs and trees. Likewise we are encumbered with defect and sin. Because of the ten commandments, the seven alms, and the three seals we are called Hearers, but are unable to do the required deeds.⁷¹

In essence Āz is the all-controlling sexual demon, to a large extent comparable to the common Christian *epithymía* and *concupiscentia*.⁷² First and foremost,

lichen Grade machte’. Von Gabain, *Türkische Turfantexte* ix, 6 makes a general reference to this passage and appears to go somewhat further in her interpretation: ‘Flügel (S. 294–296) zählt fünf Grade von Manichäern auf; nur die drei Obersten waren Elekten. Über der untersten Klasse, der der Hörer, stehen die “Wahrhaftigen, die Söhne des Geheimnisses”, die noch nicht Elekten gewesen sein sollen.—In diesem Zusammenhang sei an TT II A 91–96 erinnert: Über je zehn (Laien) wird ein (Laie) als *tawratyucī*, ‘Aneiferer’, eingesetzt. Es sei zur Diskussion gestellt, ob der *qoštr* ein oberer Laie gewesen ist’. The questions that remain do not need to be solved in our context. *Fidelis*’ here in Augustine’s parlance is almost certainly the designation for the baptized Christian.

71 Mainly according to Asmussen, *X^UĀSTVĀNĪFT*, 198–199 and Clark, *Uygur Manichaean Texts*, 92–93 (Clark numbers the section as xvb).

72 See e.g. J. van Oort, ‘Augustine and Mani on concupiscentia sexualis’, in J. den Boeft & J. van

she plays her part in the sexual domain (for the Manichaeans the pre-eminent sphere of sin, not least because *Āz* causes reproduction and thus the further incarceration of the Living Soul in matter), but she is also at the basis of all other sinful acts. In the *Xwāstwānīft* we find the latter indicated,⁷³ for example, in the sins of blasphemous speech,⁷⁴ spreading false teachings,⁷⁵ bad thoughts and sinful words.⁷⁶ This may be compared with 'the worldly affairs' that kept Augustine so shackled,⁷⁷ the *negotiones* which in his *narratio* are also referred to as 'the selling of my talent for public speaking'⁷⁸ and, for example, 'the burden of vanity'.⁷⁹ For Augustine, too, the sexual concupiscence is the first and worst evil: it is *au fond* the real basis of all wrong activities.⁸⁰

In *conf.* 8,17 Augustine states how he loved the persons about whom Ponticianus spoke because they had surrendered to God for *healing* (*ad sanandos*, above all from their enslaving sexuality) and how he detested himself because he himself was not cured. Ever since the reading of Cicero's *Hortensius*, he wanted to place (the search for) wisdom above all earthly treasures and lusts (*uoluptates*) of the body. What he means by these *uoluptates*⁸¹ he makes unequivocally clear in his reference to the prayer during his *adolescentia*: '*Da mihi castitatem et continentiam, sed noli modo*: Give me chastity and continence, but don't do this now already'.⁸² He wants chastity and continence, 'if only later'.

Oort (éd.), *Augustiniana Traiectina. Communications présentées au Colloque International d'Utrecht, 13–14 novembre 1986*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1987, 137–152 (esp. 140–145 on *Āz*), now in its final updated form as 'Was Julian Right? A Re-Evaluation of Augustine's and Mani's Doctrines of Sexual Concupiscence and the Transmission of Sin' in *Mani and Augustine* (n. 28), 384–410 (esp. 388–397 on *Āz*).

73 And constantly repeated, as in Ponticianus' *sermo*.

74 *X^UĀSTVĀNĪFT* IC; IIC.

75 *X^UĀSTVĀNĪFT* IVB; VIIIB.

76 *X^UĀSTVĀNĪFT* XVA.

77 *Conf.* 8,13.

78 *Ibidem*.

79 *Conf.* 8,18 (CCL 27,124): '... sarcinam uanitatis.'

80 See further below and especially the next note.

81 Although *uoluptas* (like e.g. *concupiscentia*) in Augustine's works often has the general meaning of '(sensual) pleasure', 'desire', etc., here it certainly denotes first and foremost the sexual passion. Cf. e.g. *conf.* 6,22 in the so-called *uita Alypii*: Alypius wondered why Augustine 'stuck so fast in the glue of that pleasure: *ita haerere uisco illius uoluptatis*' (*conf.* 6,22), *uoluptas* here being his morbid inclination to sex mentioned in the preceding paragraph. This disease (*morbus* in 6,21!) is also meant by the subsequent phrase in *conf.* 6,22: '*uictus libidinis talis uoluptatis*: overpowered by the lust of that (sexual) pleasure/passion'. More about the various (and especially sexual) meanings of *concupiscentia*, *uoluptas*, *libido*, *cupiditas* etc. in ch. 10.

82 *Conf.* 8,17 (CCL 27,124).

My interpretation is that this prayer—although perhaps first of all evoked by Cicero's protreptic call to wisdom—is most characteristic of his immediately following Manichaean years.⁸³ As an *auditor*, he was not bound by the strict asceticism of the Elect and, for example, he was allowed to have a relationship with a woman, albeit on the condition that he would not father children.⁸⁴ It is evident from Augustine's life and that of his 'concubine' that their son Adeodatus was (most likely) born in the course of 373,⁸⁵ while after Augustine's transition to the Manichaeans sometime in the same year no more children were conceived. We also know that Augustine, as an *auditor*, thoroughly immersed himself in the truths of Mani's claims⁸⁶ and that in other respects, too, he strived to 'make progress' within the Manichaean church,⁸⁷

83 Cf. e.g. O'Donnell, *Commentary*, III, 44, although I do not want to place the same emphasis on the 'exordium adolescentiae' and thus apply the statement of praying for continence even to the beginning of Augustine's sixteenth year. I suppose reading 'etiam' to mean 'even' and not 'also' may provide the solution: in his youth Augustine felt utterly wretched (at *ego adulescens miser ualde*; cf. e.g. the general characterizations of the long period (from c. 15/16-c. 25–30) of his *adulescentia* in *conf.* 2,18; 3,1 ff. etc. as 'miserabiliter' etc. and still in 7,1: 'iam mortua erat adulescentia mea mala et nefanda ...'); he felt particularly wretched at the beginning of his *adulescentia* (*miser in exordio ipsius adulescentiae*; cf. e.g. *conf.* 2,1 ff.; *miser* as explicit self-description in 2,4.12.16), and during this *adulescentia* he even prayed to God for continence. Such a prayer could very well have taken place only later in his *adulescentia*, i.e., only in his Manichaean years.

84 Cf. e.g. *mor.* 2,65 (*CSEL* 90,146–147); c. *Faust.* 22,30 (*CSEL* 25,656); *haer.* 46,13 (*CCL* 46,317).

85 I cannot follow here A. Mandouze *et alii* who s.v. 'Adeodatus 1' in *Prosopographie de l'Afrique Chrétienne* (303–533), Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique 1982, 32, state: 'fils unique d'Augustin, naît en 371/372 de la liaison d'Augustin avec celle qui vivra avec lui durant au moins quatorze ans'. Their substantiation for '371/372' is: 'Au moment de son inscription pour le baptême au début du carême (lequel commence en l'année 387, le 10 mars) A. a « environ quinze ans » : *AUG., conf.* IX, 6 (14), *B.A.* 14 p. 94, lignes 17–25 (confirmé *ibid.*, p. 96, lignes 5–6)'. The second reference here does not prove anything, because it relates to the (in fact unknown exact) date of the genesis of *De magistro* when interlocutor Adeodatus was 'in the sixteenth year (of his life): *cum esset in annis sedecim*', i.e., when—according to our contemporary manner of speaking—he was 15. The first reference is based on the incorrect translation (apparently following *BA* 14,95: 'il avait environ quinze ans') of '*annorum erat ferme quindecim*' (*CCL* 27,141). Not only may one wonder whether Augustine would *not* have known the age of his beloved and so admired son at such an important and incisive moment as their baptism, but it is especially decisive that '*ferme*' (or, according to some MSS, '*fere*') does not mean 'about', but 'nearly, almost'. Hence the age of Adeodatus was 'almost 15' at the time, i.e., 14. My conclusion (also deviating from G. Madec, 'Adeodatus', *AL* 1, fasc. 1 (1986), 87, who states without further substantiation: 'Le fils d'A. naquit à Carthage dans le courant de 372') is that Adeodatus was most probably born during 373.

86 E.g. *conf.* 5,12–13 (*CCL* 27,63).

87 Cf. Augustine's remark about his disappointment after making acquaintance with Faustus

that is, to be a model *auditor* at least (and possibly become an *electus*) by completely forgoing sexual activity. However, he did not succeed in his striving because the *morbus concupiscentiae* (or, in Manichaean terms, the *Āz*) kept him in its grip.

Such was Augustine's situation when, so he tells, 'I walked evil ways in wicked superstition',⁸⁸ namely in his years as a convinced Manichaean. In the same way this *morbus concupiscentiae* was present in the years of his doubt and ensuing detachment.⁸⁹ Likewise this *morbus concupiscentiae* was still not overcome when he heard Ponticianus' *sermo*.

3.4 *Likely Manichaean Elements in conf. 8,18–21*

If, in the foregoing, we have rightly been reminded of the Manichaean Bêma Festival as a phenomenon that influenced the beginning of Augustine's *nar-ratio*, then perhaps we may also discover such elements in its continuation. Indeed I suppose there are such elements. First, it is well known that a very strict penance and fasting practice was inextricably linked to the Bêma Festival. We have seen reminiscences of these observances in our analysis of *conf.* 3,16; they are almost certainly also present in the following paragraphs.

Not only did Augustine 'hate himself with detestation', so he relates in *conf.* 8,17, but 'the day had come when I saw myself in my nakedness and my conscience cried out in me: "Where is your tongue?"'⁹⁰ His conscience constantly gnawed inside him and he was 'deeply moved by terrible shame' (*confundebat pudore horribili*).⁹¹ After Ponticianus' departure he returned to himself (*et ego [abii] ad me*), scourging his soul 'with the whips of my words'.⁹² Nothing was left to him but 'speechless tremble' (*muta trepidatio*).⁹³ In the following description of his inner struggle,⁹⁴ he speaks of 'tearing out his hair', 'slapping himself in front of the head', and 'grasping his knee with intertwined fingers'.⁹⁵

(*conf.* 5,13; *CCL* 27,63): 'Ceterum conatus omnis meus, quo proficere in illa secta statueram, illo homo cognito prorsus intercidit ...'.

88 *Conf.* 8,17 (*CCL* 27,124): 'Et ieram per uias prauas superstitione sacrilega ...'.

89 *Ibidem*: 'non quidem certus in ea ...'. For the doubt and detachment, cf. e.g. *conf.* 5,25; 8,1 and for the *consuetudo uiolenta* cf. *conf.* 8,26.

90 *Conf.* 8,18 (*CCL* 27,124): 'Et uenerat dies, quo nudarer mihi et increparet in me conscientia mea: "Vbi est lingua?" ...'.

91 *Ibidem*: 'Ita rodebar intus et confundebat pudore horribili uehementer ...'.

92 *Ibid.*: 'Quibus sententiarum uerberibus non flagellaui animam meam ...'. Cf. *infra* on *conf.* 8,25 (*CCL* 27,129): '... flagella ... timoris et pudoris ...'.

93 *Ibid.* (*CCL* 27,125): 'Consumpta erant et conuicta argumenta omnia: remanserat muta trepidatio ...'.

94 *Conf.* 8,19–20 (*CCL* 27,125–126): 'Tum in illa grandi rixa interioris domus meae ...' etc.

95 *Conf.* 8,20 (*CCL* 27,126): 'Si uulsi capillum, si percussi frontem, si consertis digitis ampl-exatus sum genu ...'. On *'genu'*, see below.

Immediately after that Augustine refers to his inner division by two wills as a *monstrum*.⁹⁶

Perhaps it is possible to find parallels for all these conspicuous statements in biblical and other texts. Indeed, they might be heard here and there,⁹⁷ but the combination of all these elements seems to be a striking reminder of the very strict Manichaean penance during their fasts, which were most extensive and intensive at their Bêma Festival.

'And the day had come (*Et uenerat dies ...*) when I was made naked for myself ...', Augustine states. It is noticeable how often the Bêma Festival is referred to as 'the day'. In the Coptic *Psalmbook* it reads, for example:

- 10 May he [sc. Mani] wipe away our iniquities, the scars that are branded
on our souls.
- 11 Year by (*katá*) year there is **the day** (*hooue*): let us not forget, so that it
goes
- 12
- 21 Glory and honour to them that keep festival on **this mighty day**
(*hooue*).⁹⁸

The 'day' of the Bêma, coming at the end of the Manichaeans' church year and after a month of fasting, was a day of joy.⁹⁹ But it was no less a day of

96 *Conf.* 8,21 (*CCL* 27,126): 'Vnde hoc monstrum? Et quare istuc?'

97 Possibly reference could be made to 2 Cor. 5:1–10: the old and the new man; nudity; the Bêma of Christ.—J. Gibbs and W. Montgomery, *The Confessions of Augustine*, Cambridge: At the University Press 1927, 221 (cf. 184–185) refer for 'et ego ad me' (*conf.* 8,18) to (Neo)Platonic tradition such as Plotinus, *Enn.* 1,6,9: '*anage epi sautón*'. Nearly all editors, commentators and translators (and also e.g. Henry, *Plotin et l'Occident*, 107 *et alibi*) rightly refer for '*et non illuc ibatur nauibus aut quadrigis aud pedibus*' (*conf.* 8,19; *CCL* 27,125; cf. *conf.* 1,28) to Plotinus, *Enn.* 1,6,8. As regards '*si uulsi capillum*' (*conf.* 8,20), E. Feldmann, 'Confessiones', *AL* 1 (1986–1994) 1179–1180 n. 368, remarks: 'Es ist möglich, daß auch [sc. as in the discussion of the two opposite wills that is directly related to Manichaean thinking] in dem «uulsi capillum» (*ib.* 8,20) eine Anspielung auf manichäische Adams-Traditionen vorliegt' (on which below).

98 *Bêma Psalm* 241, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 47. For innumerable other references in the *Bêma Psalms* to '**the day**' (e.g. *hooue*, *hoou*) or for an emphatic '**today**' (*mpoou*), see e.g. *Psalm-Book*, 7,18; 12,12.18; 20,29; 21,7.9.12; 25,15.28; 26,4; 27,20; 29,28; 30,10.12.13.28; 31,21; 32.9.24.27. 28.29; etc.

99 E.g. *Bêma Psalm* 222, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 7,18: 'Lo, there has come to thee the grace of **the day** of joy ...'. Cf. e.g. *Bêma Psalm* 224, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 12,28–29; *Bêma Psalm* 225, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 17,31–32; etc.

judgment.¹⁰⁰ Mani's judgment puts the sinner to shame;¹⁰¹ he trembles before him,¹⁰² and stands naked. Although in the hitherto edited *Bêma* and other psalms there is no reference to any 'ordinary' sinner as standing 'naked',¹⁰³ it was certainly a common Manichaean notion: in the so-called 'Judgment Scene' from Central Asia, the sinners are depicted standing 'naked'.¹⁰⁴

Augustine's *conscientia* cried out to him: 'Where is your tongue?' At first reading one undoubtedly thinks of the 'fluent tongue'¹⁰⁵ of the rhetorician, and this is probably what Augustine meant first of all. But the Manichaean reader will have heard typical overtones: the tongue not only pertains to the Manichaean *signaculum oris*, but—according to Augustine—it is its very essential element.¹⁰⁶ With his tongue the believer can blasphemously deny the 'truth'

100 E.g. *Bêma Psalm* 222, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 7,17.30; 8,7; *Bêma Psalm* 224, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 12,6; etc. Both elements are directly connected in e.g. *Bêma Psalm* 222, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 8,10–12: 'Hail (*chaïre*), Bêma of Victory, great sign of our city (*pólis*); joyous / shining garland of the souls that are victorious, but judgment / and condemnation (*krisis*) of sinners'.

101 E.g. *Bêma Psalm* 224, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 13,1. This especially applies to the sinful followers of 'the sects' (cf. *Bêma Psalm* 229, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 25,9–11; *Bêma Psalm* 230, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 26,16–17; etc.) and 'the enemy' (e.g. *Bêma Psalm* 238, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 38,28).

102 See e.g. the quoted passage from *Bêma Psalm* 232 above.

103 In e.g. *Bêma Psalm* 229, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 25,9–11 the 'naked' are (the followers of) the 'sects'. One may compare in the Berlin *Kephalaia* (ed. H.J. Polotsky-A. Böhlig, Stuttgart 1940 ff.) e.g. 27,25; 83,27; 178,18. I pass over the issue to what extent in Manichaeism (as e.g. in Syriac Christianity) there was probably the idea that a person (a soul!) was clothed by doing good works (and thus, by contrast, the sinner was naked). There could also be a link with the Pauline idea—well known among the Manichaeans—of becoming stripped of the old man and putting on the new man. Cf. e.g. *Bêma Psalm* 229, ed. Allberry 25,12–14.

104 Cf. e.g. Le Coq, *Miniaturen* [n. 62], 61 and Tafel 8b d; Klimkeit, *Manichaean Art and Calligraphy* [n. 62], 37 (discussion) and Plate xvi; Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art* [n. 62], 79 (reproduction of *MIK* III 4959 verso) and 81 (discussion). For an analysis of this motif, see Gulácsi, *Mani's Pictures. The Didactic Images of the Manichaeans from Sasanian Mesopotamia to Uyghur Central Asia and Tang-Min China*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2015, 345–354. To be clear: 'naked' here means that they only have some (white) clothing around their loins. For a similar form of 'nakedness' one may also compare John 21:7 and Augustine's sermons *in loco*.

105 Cf. e.g. Hammond (tr.), *Augustine, Confessions, Books 1–8*, 389: 'Where is that fluent tongue now?'

106 On the Manichaean *tria signacula*, see e.g. Augustine, *mor.* 2,19 ff. (*CSEL* 90,104 ff.). Here, about the *signaculum oris* it runs, among other things: 'Sed cum os, inquit [sc. the Manichaean *homo* being questioned], nomino, omnes sensus qui sunt in capite intelligi uolo ...' (*mor.* 2,19); 'Ad oris enim signaculum dicitis [sc. you, the Manichaeans] pertinere ab omni continere blasphemiam' (*mor.* 2,20). Note that Augustine in *mor.* 2,19 (*CSEL* 90,105) speaks no less than five times of 'lingua' in stead of 'os' and thus actually speaks of a *signaculum linguae*.

of the Manichaean principles.¹⁰⁷ That is exactly what Augustine is reproaching himself here regarding the Catholic *ueritas*.

How much the sinner was trembled before Mani's Bêma we have seen in the long quote from *Bêma Psalm* 232.¹⁰⁸ In addition, in the Bêma and other Psalms, sinners, false believers and not least the devil are put to shame (*šipe*).¹⁰⁹

Obviously, the inward turn ('*ego [abii] ad me*') is typical of Manichaeism, as it is of any Gnostic movement.¹¹⁰ However, I do not know of any parallel in classical literature or ancient philosophical texts for an introspection which scourges one's soul 'with the whips of words'. The only exceptions seem to be found in both the *Bêma Psalms* and several other Manichaean texts full of passages involving rigorous introspection in which the soul asks itself scourging questions.¹¹¹

The expression 'speechless tremble' could very well be a reminiscence of a Bêma Feast experience: we have seen that people 'tremble' in front of Mani's

¹⁰⁷ On the Manichaeans proclaiming the 'truth' with their 'tongue', see e.g. *conf.* 3.10. The key content of this truth and what essential role the tongue played in its proclamation, is clearly stated in negative form in a Psalm without title (with its first editor Allberry usually dubbed a 'Psalm to Jesus', which however could very well have been part of the Bêma Festival and thus a Bêma Psalm): 'I have not defiled my tongue with / blasphemy because of the knowledge which thou gavest me and the / separation of these two races, that of Light and / that of Darkness' (Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 86,15–18). Elsewhere in the *Psalm-Book* it runs, for example: 'The tongue which speaks no lie' (Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 139,49); 'I am a holy Continent (*enkratés*) one. / I have purified my God by my tongue' (Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 175,12–13).

¹⁰⁸ Above, pp. 130–131 with nn. 50 and 52.

¹⁰⁹ See e.g. *Psalm-Book*, 181,15: 'Shame to this lover of sin that repents not ...'; 17,4; 23,32; 25,10; 26,16; 38,28; 40,17–18: 'Be not ashamed, o Faithful (*pistís*) one, as thou goest unto thy [true?] life'; etc.

¹¹⁰ And, of course, the inward turn was also characteristic of Platonism from ancient times onwards, and not least of Plotinus' *Enneads*. But without any 'scourging word'!

¹¹¹ E.g. *Bêma Psalm* 222, *Psalm-Book*, 7,12 ff.: 'O Soul, know this great sign ...'; etc. Cf. in particular one of the *Psalmoi Sarakôtôn*, containing a long complaint to Mani in scourging words (e.g. *Psalm-Book*, 147,48.64: 'Do not find fault with me [or: blame me]'; 'I have shown my wounds' etc.), followed by a longue dialogue between the Saviour and the Soul (*Psalm-Book*, 148–149). One may compare to this complaint (possibly inspired by Manichaean confessional practices such as at the Bêma Feast) e.g. *c. Fort.* 17 (*CSEL* 25, 94): 'si respondeat secundum uestram fidem et dicat: quid enim peccaui? quid commerui? quid me expulisti de regnis tuis, ut contra nescio quam gentem pugnarem? depressa sum, permixta sum, corrupta sum, defecta sum ...' and *c. Fort.* 21 (*CSEL* 25, 101): 'qui possum dicere secundum fidem uestram: quid feci? quid commisi? apud te fui, integer fui, nulla labe contaminatus fui; tu me hic misisti, tu necessitatem passus es, tu cauisti regnis tuis, cum magna eis labe et uastitas inmineret'. For scrupulous Manichaean introspection one may also compare e.g. *Kephalaia* 213,21–216,30.

judgment seat. The fact that there is temporarily silence in front of it is suggested in one of the *Bêma Psalms*.¹¹²

'Tearing out one's hair', 'striking the forehead', and 'grasping one's knees'¹¹³ with intertwined fingers' may well be signs of repentance and mourning that go back to biblical and classical examples.¹¹⁴ But they can certainly also belong to the Manichaean repentance and contrition as part of the Bêma Festival. One does not only stand before and stare at Mani's Bêma, but also bows down to it repentantly: 'Let / us prostrate ourselves, beseeching thee [sc. Mani], imploring thy / pity, o merciful one'.¹¹⁵ As for the 'intertwined fingers' and the apparently bent knees: according to Puech, these certainly belong to the confessional *proskýnēsis*.¹¹⁶ It may be possible that Manichaean Adam traditions are at the

112 *Bêma Psalm 222, Psalm-Book*, 7,22–25: 'Paul, the glorious one, bears witness, saying unto thee [i.e., the Soul]: "The / Bêma of Christ, in it there is no respect of persons: whether we will / or not we shall all ... it." This too is what the Bêma / *silently* proclaims.' [With Wurst, *Bêmafest*, 167 n. 4, I notice that the quotation from Paul probably goes no further than 'persons'; cf. e.g. Rom. 2:11; 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10.] One might compare *Bêma Psalm 230, Psalm-Book*, 26,1–8: 'Light resplendent, the Bêma, thou art come; we call / unto thee, the children of the Paraclete, our Lord Mani. / I will keep festival for thee today; I have purified my heart, o Bêma, / holy likeness, that *overawes* him that approaches it. / I bless thee, o glorious seat, the sign / of the Wisdom (*sophía*); we worship the sign of thy greatness and / thy mysteries *ineffable*.'

113 For several reasons (why only clasp one knee, and—if so—which one?; the likely agreement with the Manichaean attitude, on which below) I am inclined to read with MSS E and F (cf. e.g. Verheijen, *CCL* 27, 126 n. and S. *Avreli Avgvstini Confessionvm libri XIII edidit M. Skvtella*. Editionem correctiorem crravervnt H. Jvergeng et W. Schavb, Stvtgardiae et Lipsiae: Teubner 1996, 170 n) *genua*, 'knees'. Or in any case to understand sg. *genu* as connoting our pl. *knees*. Cf. e.g. Augustine's s. 319,4: '*Genu fixit* (sc. Stephanus) ...'; '*... pro illis genu fixit ...*'; '*Quare ergo genu fixit?*' etc., although Acts 7:59 in all Latin versions known to me has '*genua*'.

114 For biblical examples, see e.g. Jos. 7:6; 1 Sam. 4:12; Job 1:20; Jer. 16:6; Ezra 9:3. For classical ones, see e.g. Virgil, *Aen.* 4, 672; for many instances from the Greek tradition, see e.g. M. Alexiou, *The Lament in Greek Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1974. The Sogdian fragment in Manichaean script M 549 (W.B. Henning, *Selected Papers*, 11, Téhéran-Liège: Bibliothèque Pahlavi & Leiden: Brill 1977, 148–150) on which it runs *inter alia*: 'loud they cry out, they weep, tear (their garments), pull out (their hairs) and throw themselves to the ground' appears to belong to the mourning category.

115 *Bêma Psalm 223, Psalm-Book*, 7,1–4. Cf. e.g. *Bêma Psalm 227, Psalm-Book* 20,19–20: 'We worship thee, the judge (*krités*), the Paraclete, / we bless thy Bêma whereon thou art seated'. In many other texts this worshipping prostration is referred to by the technical term *proskýnēsis*, a veneration also being part of the Manichaean myth (cf. e.g. *Kephalaion IX*).

116 Puech, *Sur le manichéisme* (n. 64), 306: 'Le pénitent se préparait à la confession par un jeûne. Il se mettait à genoux pour déclarer ses fautes et, jusqu'au bout, demeurerait agenouillé. Sans doute aussi gardait-il les mains jointes'.

background, but with just a reference to Augustine's '*uulsi capillum*' this is certainly not proven.¹¹⁷

All these manifestations of a torn and sin confessing soul are mentioned at the beginning of Augustine's discussion of the phenomenon of the two contending wills. Curiously, in *conf.* 8,21 that strange phenomenon of two opposing wills is called a '*monstrum*' no less than four times.¹¹⁸ One may possibly translate the Latin '*monstrum*' as 'this monstrous situation',¹¹⁹ 'this monstrous wonder',¹²⁰ or even as 'perversion'.¹²¹ But two things should attract special attention: (1) the word *monstrum* also appears towards the end of the famous story of the pear theft which—according to some scholars—is full of Manichaean reminiscences;¹²² there it seems to denote the disorder of the will because of human's bad concupiscence;¹²³ (2) for Manichaeans, the Āz is the monster *par excellence*, source and ever-abiding dragon that incites sin.

I am inclined to understand *monstrum* as another 'catch-word' in Augustine's *narratio* that is unambiguously clear to (ex-)Manichaean ears: in point of fact, it is the Manichaean Āz.¹²⁴ One may compare the following quote from the Manichaean *Psalmbook*:

117 Cf. n. 97 above. Feldmann's reference is to the important excerpts by Theodore bar Konai from one of Mani's canonical books and—apart from the translation by A. Adam in his well-known *Texte zum Manichäismus*, Berlin: De Gruyter 1969²—he refers to a translation by H.H. Schaeder. Adam (*Texte*, 22) renders the phrase in question as 'er zerriß (sein Kleid)'. John Reeves (*Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony*, Cincinnati, OH: Hebrew Union College Press 1992, 193; *Heralds of That Good Realm*, Leiden-New York-Köln: E.J. Brill 1996, 79; *Prolegomena to a History of Islamicate Manichaeism*, Sheffield-Bristol: Equinox 2011, 152) simply renders the Syriac as 'He cast (himself down)'. Even if 'Er raufte sich *die Haare*' (in this way also A. Böhlig, *Die Gnosis*, Dritter Band, *Der Manichäismus*, Zürich-München: Artemis Verlag 1980, 108, my italics) would be correct, I doubt its relevance to the quoted words of Augustine.

118 *Conf.* 8,21 (*CCL* 27,126–127): 'Vnde hoc monstrum? Et quare istuc?'; 'Vnde hoc monstrum? Et quare istuc?'; 'Vnde hoc monstrum? Et quare istuc?'; 'Non igitur monstrum partim uelle, partim nolle, sed aegritudo animi est ...'.

119 Chadwick, *Augustine, Confessions*, 147, who also translates as 'this monstrous fact'; 'this monstrosity' and (148) 'monstrous split'. Cf. e.g. M. Boulding, *The Confessions* (WSA I/1), Hyde Park, New York: New City Press 1997, 201: 'this bizarre situation'; 'bizarre'.

120 E. Tréhorel and G. Bouissou in *BA* 14, 51 and 53: 'ce prodige monstrueux'.

121 Hammond, *Augustine, Confessions, Books 1–8*, 395: 'perversion'.

122 E.g. L.C. Ferrari, 'The Pear-Theft in Augustine's "Confessions"', *REA* 16 (1970) 233–242; BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, 1, 38–41.

123 See *conf.* 2,24 (*CCL* 27,24): 'O putredo, o monstrum uitae et mortis profunditas', and its preceding context (e.g. '... *tenebrosa* omnipotentiae similitudine').

124 Cf. above pp. 136–137 and van Oort, 'Was Julian Right?' (n. 72), 390 ff. Cf. for 'the insatiable and shameless Āz demon' also *X'ĀSTVĀNĪFT* XIIB and XVb.

- 15 He that conquers the fire (*sete*) shall be the sun by day; he that conquers
 16 desire (*epithymía*) shall be the moon by night.
 17 The sun and the moon in the sky, they conquer these two, the heat
 18 and the cold, the summer and the winter.
 19 The holy Church will conquer them also, the fire (*sete*) and
 20 the lust (*hēdoné*), the lion-faced **dragon** (*drákōn*).¹²⁵

3.5 *The Two Wills; Augustine's 'consuetudo'; the Manichaeans'*
'conuenticulum' and Bible (conf. 8,22–27)

Although Augustine's discussion of the two *uoluntates* did start earlier in his narrative,¹²⁶ it culminates in its anti-Manichaean fashion in *conf.* 8,22–27. Because of their awareness that in human decision making there are two wills, the Manichaeans claim there are two natures (*naturae*) each with its own mind (*mens*), one good, one bad. I am not going into the debated issue of whether Augustine correctly represents the views of the Manichaeans;¹²⁷ the point here is that he addresses the question in a remarkably broad manner in his *narratio* and that the problem for himself relates to his sinful *consuetudo*. The latter case is already clearly indicated at the end of *conf.* 8,21:

Non igitur monstrum partim uelle, partim nolle, sed aegritudo animi est, quia non totus assurgit ueritate subleuatus, consuetudine prae-grauius.¹²⁸

So it is not a monster to be partly willing and partly not willing, but it is a disease of the mind, for the mind does not arise in its entirety, supported by truth, depressed by habit.

125 *Psalmoi Sarakōtōn ...*, *Psalm-Book*, 156,15–20. For Matter and its random Āz as a monster like a 'lion-faced' dragon, see e.g. *Psalm-Book* [= *Bēma Psalm* 225] 17,18; 151,16.21; 156, 19–20 (= *Psalmoi Sarakōtōn ...*: 'The holy Church [*ekklēsia*] will conquer them also, the [fire (*sete*) and / the lust [*hēdoné*], the lion-face dragon [*drákōn*]; 164,3,6; 180,1; *Kephalaia* VI (ed. Polotsky, 30–34, esp. 33,33); etc.

126 See already *conf.* 8,10 (above, n. 25) and e.g. the just discussed paragraphs *conf.* 8,20–21.

127 In his anti-Manichaean *duab. an.* (c. 392) he speaks of their concept of *duae animae* in each human, one soul being a part of God's substance and the other a part of the substance of evil. Indeed, one does not find the terminology of *duae animae* in the Manichaean sources. However, they do speak of a good and bad *mens* and it is this nomenclature one finds in *conf.* 8,22.24. Cf. Augustine's explanation of the opinion of the Manichaeans in *haer.* 46,19 (*CCL* 46,319): 'easque duas *animas*, uel duas *mentes*, unam bonam, alteram malam, in uno homine inter se habere conflictum, quando caro concupiscit aduersus spiritum, et spiritus aduersus carnem'.

128 *Conf.* 8,21 (*CCL* 27, 126–127).

Earlier in book 8, Augustine made it clear what this *consuetudo* is: it is his sexual passion (*libido*) that has become a habit (*consuetudo*) and even a necessity (*necessitas*) (*conf.* 8,10). He fights against this *consuetudo* that holds him like a chain (*catena*) (*conf.* 8,10.11.12). He begins the *narratio* of his conversion by saying characteristically: 'I will now tell how You redeemed me from the chain of the desire for copulation (*uinculum desiderii concubitus*) by which I was most firmly bound ...' (*conf.* 8,13). It is this 'disease of sexual desire' (*morbus concupiscentiae*) that constitutes his 'stream of habit' (*fluxus consuetudinis*) (*conf.* 8,17.18).

This binding *consuetudo* is again clearly present in Augustine's speaking of 'the sin that dwells in me' (*conf.* 8,22; cf. Rom. 7:17) and for instance in his summarizing note: 'So was my sickness and my torture. (...) I was twisting and turning in my chain (*uinculum*) until it would break completely', as it is present in the mention of his ingrained evil (*deterius inolitum*) (*conf.* 8,25). This sexual *consuetudo* is finally referred to at the end of *conf.* 8,26 and the beginning of *conf.* 8,27: 'Meanwhile the overwhelming force of habit (*consuetudo*) kept saying to me: "Do you think you can cope without those things?". But the call of habit was now already very dull ...'.

The last-mentioned words are said when Augustine is going to describe how the figure of *continentia* reveals herself to his gaze. We will return to Lady Continence (*conf.* 8,27) and the metaphor of the 'old girlfriends' (*conf.* 8,26) in a moment. Manichaean imagery may resonate in these figures in a special way. But first, some more or less characteristic Manichaean elements present in the foregoing paragraphs may be mentioned.

As we have seen in Part I: in *conf.* 8,22 Augustine addresses the Manichaeans *directly*.¹²⁹ His talk of 'shame' in this context ('*erubescite*' etc.) has resonances in Manichaean texts and may recall experiences in front of Mani's Bêma.¹³⁰ But it is also conspicuous that he considers the conversion of those Manichaeans possible:

Ipsi uere mali sunt, cum ista mala sentiunt, et idem ipsi boni erunt, si uera senserint verisque consenserint, ut dicat eis apostolus tuus: *Fuistis aliquando tenebrae, nunc autem lux in domino*.¹³¹

They themselves are truly bad when they think such bad things, and these same people will be good if they think true things and agree with the

¹²⁹ *Conf.* 8,22 quoted above, n. 30.

¹³⁰ Cf. above and nn. 101 and 109.

¹³¹ *Conf.* 8,22 (CCL 27,127).

truth, so that Your apostle may say to them: 'You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord' (Eph. 5:8).

Also interesting is his speaking of the Manichaean assembly as a '*conuenticulum*', i.e., the small community in contrast to the great '*ecclesia*' of the Catholics.¹³² And of no less importance here seems to be Augustine's question directly pertaining to the Manichaeans:

Nam quaero ab eis, utrum bonum sit delectari lectione apostoli et utrum bonum sit delectari psalmo sobrio et utrum bonum sit euangelium disserere.¹³³

For I ask them whether it is good to enjoy a reading from the apostle, and whether it is good to enjoy a sober psalm, and whether it is good to discourse on the gospel.

This could be an unexpected indication of either some threefold composition of the Manichaean Bible Canon as consisting of the Apostle, the Psalms, and the Gospel, or an indication of a customary scriptural 'liturgy' during the meetings of the Manichaean '*conuenticulum*'.

Either way, all this evidence unmistakably indicates that in Augustine's *narratio* of his conversion the Manichaeans and their apostle Paul are in the forefront of his mind.

3.6 *The 'antiquae amicae' and Lady Continence (conf. 8,26–27)*

Augustine's subsequent speaking of his 'old girlfriends' and the dignified appearance of Lady Continence seems to be much in line with the foregoing. In

¹³² Conf. 8,23 (CCL 27,127–128). More on this phenomenon and the Manichaeans' stress on being 'the few' in A. Hoffmann, 'The Few and the Many: A Motif of Augustine's Controversy with the Manichaeans', in *Augustine and Manichaean Christianity* (n. 28), 87–106.—With regard to '*in eam*' in a following phrase in conf. 8,23 (CCL 27,128): 'Aut enim fatebuntur, quid nolunt, bona uoluntate pergi in ecclesiam nostram, sicut in eam pergunt qui sacramentis eius imbuti sunt atque detinentur ...', O'Donnell, *Commentary*, III, 50, remarks: 'Generally referred to "*ecclesiam nostram*" but Pusey [sc. in his widely read English translation] rightly applies it to *ecclesiam manichaeam*; "*detinentur*" is pejorative ...'. However, this seems to be incorrect: (1) the Manichaean church had no sacraments in the usual sense; (2) '*detinentur*' can very well have a positive meaning, here in the sense of 'they remained involved'. Moreover (3), '*Ecclesia* of the Manichean community' (*Commentary*, III, 50–51) is certainly not 'rare': Augustine frequently uses this word for the Manichaean community and, for example, in the Coptic Manichaean Psalms the word '*ekklesiá*' appears on almost every page.

¹³³ Conf. 8,24 (CCL 27,128).

the *controuersia* in his heart, first the '*antiquae amicae meae*' appear. Are they the '*meretrices cupiditates*' of *conf.* 4,30? It could be and then the parable of the prodigal son from Luke 15 may also be heard here. In any case, in the whole paragraph *conf.* 8,26 the sexual component is clearly present: if he leaves the old *amicae*, he will not be allowed to do 'this and that for ever and ever'. *Hoc et illud* refer to filth (*sordes*) and shameful things (*dedecora*). In short, it is his sinful sexual *consuetudo* by which he is held.

That sexual *consuetudo* appears at the end of *conf.* 8,26 and the beginning of *conf.* 8,27 as a speaking personification.¹³⁴ The same is the case with the *nugae nugarum* and the *uanitates uanitatium*; then also with the enticing *continentia*. Do these personifications have any precursors in the classical and Christian traditions? The expression *uanitates uanitatium*¹³⁵ of course recalls Eccl. 1:2 (and 12:8); in *conf.* 4,1 and 4,26 '*uanus*' and '*uanitas*' are used in conspicuous ways to characterize Augustine's Manichaean years and his former ideas.¹³⁶ Sometimes this also goes for *nugae*.¹³⁷ But the rather curious fact that they, referred to as 'old girlfriends', speak and act is unknown to me from elsewhere. Not only their appearance but also the apparition of Lady Continence seems most reminiscent of Manichaean texts.

In the second volume of his *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, Jason BeDuhn remarks: 'Augustine's description of the crowd of sins vying for his attention with the figure of Continence (8.11.26–27) strongly resembles, and may have been intended to evoke, the Manichaean post-mortem scenario, in which the soul flees the gangs of demons seeking to grasp it and turns to the waiting arms of the female form of its own virtuous ideal'.¹³⁸ In my view it is indeed the Manichaean scenario (it often deals with the soul's experiences *during* the process of dying) that most closely resembles what Augustine describes here. One may compare texts from the Manichaean *Psalm Book* such as parts of

134 *Conf.* 8,26 (CCL 27,130): '... cum diceret mihi consuetudo uiolenta: "Putasne sine istis poteris?"'; *conf.* 8,27 (*ibidem*): 'Sed iam tepidissime hoc dicebat'.

135 *Conf.* 8,26 (CCL 27,129): 'Retinebant nugae nugarum et uanitates uanitatium ...'. I follow, albeit with hesitation, Verheijen. Many MSS read 'uanitates uanitantium' and so do Knöll, Skutella (and in his wake Jürgens-Schaub), O'Donnell, and Hammond. As far as I can see, Vulgata MSS and editions all have 'uanitatium' or 'uanitantium'.

136 *Conf.* 4,1 (CCL 27,40): 'Per idem tempus annorum nouem, ab undeicensimo anno aetatis meae usque ad duodeticensimum, seducebatur et seducebamur falsi atque fallentes in uariis cupiditatibus et palam per doctrinas, quas liberales uocant, occulte autem falso nomine religionis, hic superbi, ibi superstitiosi, ubique *uani* ...'; *conf.* 4,26 (CCL 27,53): '... et imaginabar formas corporeas ... a mea *uanitate* fingeantur ex corpore ...'.

137 *Conf.* 3,18 (CCL 27,37): '... sensim atque paulatim perductus ad eas *nugas*, ut crederem ficum plorare, cum decerpitur ...'.

138 BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, 2, 327.

Psalm to Jesus 252,¹³⁹ Psalm to Jesus 255,¹⁴⁰ Psalm to Jesus 267¹⁴¹ and sections of Psalm of Heracleides 282.¹⁴²

On the one hand, these texts demonstrate that the departing soul is under attack by a host of demons, sometimes more precisely described as 'the seven fearful demons'.¹⁴³ They are also referred to as 'a merciless crowd like vultures surrounding me',¹⁴⁴ 'wild destructive wolves',¹⁴⁵ 'wild beasts',¹⁴⁶ 'the demons ... and the Erinys',¹⁴⁷ or more generally indicated as 'the sons of matter'.¹⁴⁸ It is evident that they try to hold back the soul, just as the *nugae* and *uanitates* try to hold back (*retinere*) Augustine.¹⁴⁹ As with Augustine, in the Manichaean texts the sexual aspect plays a prominent role in this withholding. Apart from some expressions in the quoted Psalms (e.g. 'I kept myself holy'; 'I have spent my whole life pure'; 'I have been a holy shrine'; '... the nets of lust'), many other passages in other Psalms can be cited for this sexual connotation.¹⁵⁰

On the other hand, these texts repeatedly and in various wording speak of 'the beautiful image (*eikōn*) of Jesus'. His *eikōn* meets the soul of the dying person, brings her the threefold gifts of victory (garland, robe, prize) and leads her up through the Column of Glory to Jesus' habitations. This is—in a cursory summary—what is described in these psalms in varying representations. We will come back to some particulars in a moment. But first of all the question should be answered: What or who actually is that 'beautiful image of Jesus'? The

139 *Psalm to Jesus* 252, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 61,12–62,23.

140 *Psalm to Jesus* 255, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 66,19–21.

141 *Psalm to Jesus* 267, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 84,9–32.

142 *Psalm of Heracleides* 282, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 103,9–13,24–35.

143 See the just mentioned parts of *Psalm of Heracleides* 282 and also e.g. *Psalm of Heracleides* 285, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 108,18: 'the seven demons'.

144 *Psalm to Jesus* 252, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 61,22.

145 *Psalm to Jesus* 252, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 61,25–26.

146 *Psalm to Jesus* 255, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 66,21.

147 *Psalm to Jesus* 267, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 84,21.

148 *Psalm to Jesus* 252, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 61,19–20.

149 *Conf.* 8,26 (CCL 27,129): 'Retinebant nugae nugarum et uanitates uanitatium, antiquae amicae meae ...'.

150 Such as, for instance, a passage from *Psalm to Jesus* 247, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 55,25–29: 'The manifold bonds I have cast away from me, those that / are bound at all times unto my soul. / The lust (*hēdonē*) of the sweetness that is bitter I have not tasted .. / ... the fire of eating and drinking, I have not suffered them to [lord it / over me. / The gifts of Matter (*hylē*) I have cast away: thy sweet / yoke I have received in purity' as well as a passage from *Psalm to Jesus* 257, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 69,20–23: 'This lion that is within me I have strangled, I have turned him / away from my soul, him who pollutes me at all times, / and his bitter ... also'.

already mentioned *Psalm to Jesus* 267 gives an answer: it is 'the holy Maiden'.¹⁵¹ Who this Virgin is and what function she has will be discussed in a moment.

First, we should go back to other particulars of Augustine's *narratio*. In *conf.* 8,27 appears, opposed to the '*antiquae amicae meae*', Lady Continence. In line with former and now even classic research, one may ask: Does she have examples in the classical literary and Christian traditions? Pierre Courcelle stated in a footnote: 'L'allégorie de Continence, présentée comme une femme, apparaît déjà dans le *Pasteur* d'HERMAS, Vision, III,8,4 (...) et chez TERTULLIEN, *De monogamia*, 8 (...)'.¹⁵²

In fact, the last reference does not yield much: Tertullian is only speaking of 'the two priestesses of Christian sanctity, Monogamy and Continence: one modest, in Zechariah the priest; one absolute in John the forerunner'.¹⁵³ The reference to Hermas' vision of the seven women round the tower¹⁵⁴ does not yield more than: 'The second, who is girded and looks like a man, is called Continence (*Enkráteia*); she is the daughter of Faith. Whosoever then shall follow her becomes blessed in his life, because he will abstain from all evil deeds, believing that if he refrains from evil lust (*epithymía*) he will inherit eternal life'.¹⁵⁵ In short, neither of these references is probative as a possible source for our passage. The mentioning of Hermas is extra problematic because this writing is never quoted by Augustine.¹⁵⁶

In contrast, Lady Continence is clearly and variously present in the Manichaean texts. It is extra important to read well here to correctly understand the multiform images in these texts. First, continence is the undeniable ideal of those Manichaeans who do not belong to the *electi*, but who strive for perfection in their Manichaean way of life. The Elect are the 'Virgins' (*parthénōi*); the Auditors who completely abstain themselves are the 'Continents' (*enkrateïs*).

151 *Psalm to Jesus* 267, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 84,31–32.

152 Courcelle, *Recherches*, 192 n. 2.

153 Tertullian, *Mon.* 8 (*CSEL* 76,58–60).

154 An image of the Church, as in Hermas, *Sim.* 9.

155 Hermas, *Vis.* 3,8,4; cf. e.g. the classical and widely diffused edition *The Apostolic Fathers*, with an English translation by Kirsopp Lake (*LCL*), London: William Heinemann & New York: Harvard University Press 1924 (many reprints), II, 47.

156 Cf. e.g. J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon. A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities*, Leiden etc.: E.J. Brill 1992 (repr. Leiden-Boston: Brill 2003), 303. One might consider whether this was due to some anti-Manichaean sentiment. After all, the *Pastor Hermae* was well known in the West, even in Latin translations and quoted by several contemporaries of Augustine. Even among the Manichaeans of Central Asia the *Shepherd* was also read. Cf. van Oort, *ibidem*. For the 'Vulgate' Hermas, see now C. Tornau and P. Ceconi (eds.), *The Shepherd of Hermas in Latin. Critical Edition of the Oldest Translation Vulgata* (TU 173), Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter 2014.

Numerous sources speak of these two types of Manichaeans. How an ordinary Auditor can attain the status of a 'holy Continent' is stated in the Coptic *Kephalaia*:

However, [i]n contrast, what is called / 'continent' (*enkratés*), is the man who has a woman in the world (*kosmós*). Afterwards, he cleanses himself from her / [and] renounces her. And because of this he [...] and he becomes a holy / contin[en]t one (*enkratés*).¹⁵⁷

As I indicated earlier, from the *Confessiones* we may deduce that Augustine strived to make progress among the Manichaeans. As an ordinary *auditor*, he belonged to the lowest class, but apparently he took his being a Manichaean so seriously that he wanted to move up. Those Manichaean *auditores* had a higher status who—although bound by concubinage or marriage to a woman—restricted themselves in their sexual intercourse and strictly adhered to Manichaean precepts in other respects as well. For instance in the *Kephalaia* it is said:

So, listen how I make clear to you / the works of the faithful catechumens. The cat[echu]/men who truly believes performs fifty fasts, wherein [he] / fasts on the fifty lord's days of the y[ear]. Also, he masters their purification, controlling himself (*enkrateuein**) [from] / lust (*epithymía*) for his wife, purifying his bedroom through / self- control (*enkrateía*) on all these lord's days.¹⁵⁸

However, these 'faithful catechumens' were apparently surpassed by the *enkrateís* or *continentes*, i.e., those *auditores* who completely abstained themselves from sex and other sins (but as non-*parthénoi* no longer qualified for the class of the Elect, as was the case with Augustine). About these 'continents' it reads in one of the *Psalms of Heracleides*:

- 25 Call to the builders, saying: Come, build quickly.
 Build quickly, ye builders, for the time (*kairós*) is ripe (?) upon us.
 Lo, we have laid out the foundation: Christ is the *themélios*.
 He that has gold for the building,—let him build
 virginity (*parthenía*). Call.

¹⁵⁷ *Kephalaia* 249, 23–26; transl. I. Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher. The edited Coptic Manichaean Texts in Translation with Commentary*, Leiden-New York- Köln: E.J. Brill 1995, 255, with minor emendation.

¹⁵⁸ *Kephalaia* 233,1–7; transl. Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 240.

30 He that has silver for the building,—let him build continence (*enkráteia*).

Call.¹⁵⁹

The figure of Lady Continence that comes into sight immediately in the run-up to Augustine's definitive conversion seems to be best understood from this background. It should be noted that she is described as 'bright' (*serena*) and 'cheerful' (*hilaris*), 'enticing in an honourable manner' (*honeste blandiens*) and that 'she smiled' at Augustine 'with a challenging smile' (*et inridebat me inrisione hortatoria*). The Manichaean reader will no doubt be reminded of the Virgin of Light. In the just mentioned *Psalm to Jesus* 267 we meet her already:

Come] to me, my Lord Jesus, stand with me in [the hour
 10 of [my] need (*anágkē*).
 joyous [*eikōn*] of my Lord come to meet me ...
 the demons and their also
 because of thy hope (*elpís*) wherein I believed.
 [...]
 I worship thee, Image (*eikōn*) of my Master, which I loved before
 25 I saw it, but (*allá*) because of its fame whereof I heard
 I kept myself holy, that I might be counted worthy of it.
 30 Draw now the veil (*ouēlon*) of thy secrets until I see
 the beauty of the joyous Image (*eikōn*) of my Mother, the holy
 Maiden (*parthénos*), who will ferry me until she brings me to my city
 (*pólis*).¹⁶⁰

Elsewhere the Virgin appears even more prominently. In other *Psalms to Jesus* it runs, for instance:

Jesus, my] Light, I cry unto thee in the hour of the going forth
 20 from the body], do not, my Light, do not forsake me
 in the midst] of the wild beasts (*thēríon*).
 Let] me be worthy also to see thy Maiden (*parthénos*) for whose sake

159 *Psalm of Heracleides* [without number], Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 188,25–31. Besides Pauline elements (e.g. from 1 Cor.), the *Pastor Hermae* may also resound in this Psalm.

160 *Psalm to Jesus* 267, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 84,9–13,24–32 In my quote I have supplemented ... *ōn* in 84,11 as seen in the original MS by Allberry to the virtually certain word *eikōn*.

I have toiled, who brings all the gifts
of the faithful (*pistós*), and her three angels that are with her.¹⁶¹

O first-born, take me in unto thee.
Lo, the path of Light has stretched before me unto my
30 first city (*pólis*), the place
..... unto whom I look, who the dissolution
..... the image (*eikōn*) of the Saviour (*sōtēr*) has come unto me.
O first-

[born take me in unto thee.]

Lo, the Light of the Maiden (*parthénos*) has shone forth on me, the
glorious
likeness [of the Truth], with her three angels, the
5 givers of] grace. O first-born [take me in unto thee.]
The gates (*púlē*) of the skies have opened before me through the rays
(*aktís*) of
my] Saviour (*sōtēr*) and his glorious likeness of Light.¹⁶²

In the above texts, the Maiden is always referred to by the (Greek derived) Coptic word *parthénos*. Under this name she appears dozens of times in the Coptic Manichaean texts (and e.g. in Latin as *Virgo*). Her role in the complicated Manichaean myth is not always clear, but usually she is a doublet of (and even identical with) the Jesus figure. The latter is evident in the texts just quoted: the Virgin is the Image (*eikōn*) or likeness (*eine*) of Jesus. She is a heavenly, 'glorious' figure and therefore has 'dignity'; as her name indicates she is chaste, but also 'bright' and 'cheerful'.

All qualifications and characteristics Augustine communicates of Lady Continence (*dignitas; serena; hilaris; aperiebatur*) we recognize in the above-quoted Manichaean texts in which the Parthenos is mentioned: the Maiden is 'the joyous Image of my Lord'; she is famous (cf. 'because of its fame whereof I heard I kept myself holy'); her venerable, heavenly appearance *meets* the believer ('the image (*eikōn*) of the Saviour (*sōtēr*) has come unto me'; 'the Light of the Maiden/Parthenos has shone forth on me'). Honestly (*honeste*) she lures and so she is for Augustine the opposite of 'that audacious and foolish woman' of *conf.* 3,11 who once 'deceived' him.¹⁶³

161 *Psalm to Jesus* 255, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 66,19–24.

162 *Psalm to Jesus* 264, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 80,28–81,7.

163 *Conf.* 3,11 (*CCL* 27,33): '... illam mulieram audacem, inopem prudentiae ... [q]uae me seduxit ...'.

In the just quoted Manichaean texts the Virgin appears in (after-)death scenarios. This is also indicated by the fact that she is accompanied by her three angels with their threefold gift: the garland, the robe (*stolé*) and the prize (*brabeïon*).¹⁶⁴ She also plays a prominent role in the Manichaean cosmological myth.¹⁶⁵ But she is certainly also present in texts relating to the Bêma Festival as well as in sources discussing the vicissitudes of the present life of the Manichaean believer. The Bêma at the Bêma Feast sometimes turns out not only to be the seat of Jesus, but even that of the Maiden.¹⁶⁶ In a 'Psalm to the Trinity' (which, like certain *Psalms to Jesus*, could very well be a Psalm sung at the Bêma Festival) she is equated with the holy Spirit who is presently at work in the believer and thus urges discipline and preservation of the Manichaeans' 'purity':

- Jesus, the Tree of Life, is the Father; the fruit (*karpós*), the Mind (? *noûs*) of Light, is the Son; the Maiden, this sweet one, is the holy Spirit.
- 10 Jesus, the glorious, is the Father, the blessed Mind (*noûs*) of Light is the Son, the Maiden of Light is the holy Spirit.
- Let us pray then, my brethren, that we may find the Father, and fast (*nēsteúein*) daily that we may find the Son, and
- 15 discipline (*meletân*) our life that we may find the holy Spirit.
- Let us seal our mouth that we may find the Father, and seal (*sphragízein*) our (?) hands that we may find the Son, and guard our purity that we may find the holy Spirit.¹⁶⁷

Most important in our context, however, is that she is Jesus' Light Form (*tmorphē nouaïne*). In the seventh chapter of the *Kephalaia*, which deals in a scholastic-schematic way with 'the five fathers', it is said of this Light Form:

The third [sc. 'power after the pattern of Jesus'] is the Light Form (*tmorphē nouaïne*); the one whom the elect and the catechumens shall receive, should they renounce (*apotássesthai*) the world.¹⁶⁸

164 E.g. *Psalm-Book*, 84,18 etc.

165 This is especially emphasized in the 'scholastic' *Kephalaia*, but also occurs frequently in liturgical and pietistic reflections as e.g. in the Manichaean Psalms.

166 *Psalm of the Bêma* 227, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 20,31: 'This is the Bêma of Jesus and the Maiden of Light'.

167 *Psalm to the Trinity*, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 116,7–18.

168 *Kephalaia* 36,9–11; transl. Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 40.

This is what is happening to Augustine here: through the encounter with the Virgin of Light, who in *conf.* 8,27 appears to him as Lady Continence, he renounces all 'worldly' things, his sexual addiction in particular. As a result, he becomes—finally!¹⁶⁹—a Continent.

Although much more could be said of the Manichaean Maiden/Parthenos and her various roles, the above may suffice in our context. It may also be mentioned that she sometimes appears as 'Mother'¹⁷⁰ and that, in *conf.* 8,27, also Augustine speaks of Lady Continence as a *mater*.¹⁷¹

About the image-rich section *conf.* 8,26–27 and its possible sources¹⁷² one could certainly elaborate in more detail, but the above may suffice in our context.

I finally mention that Lady Continence says, 'as it were' (*quasi*): 'Make yourself deaf to your impure members on earth and mortify them'.¹⁷³ This concluding command to chastity contains a fairly literal quote of Col. 3:5. Curiously, it is the same biblical text (and its wider context) we find alluded to by the Roman Manichaean Secundinus in his Letter to Augustine.¹⁷⁴ It seems likely that, among the Manichaeans, the text¹⁷⁵ functioned as a call to total *continentia*.

169 Cf. especially his well-known adolescent prayer 'Da mihi continentiam ...' in *conf.* 8,17 (on which above, pp. 137–138).

170 See above, the quote from *Psalm to Jesus* 267, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 84,31–32. Cf. e.g. *Psalmi Sarakōtōn*, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 145,8: 'the Maiden, the Mother of all lives'.

171 *Conf.* 8,27 (CCL 27,130): '... et in omnibus ipsa continentia nequaquam sterilis, sed fecunda mater filiorum gaudiorum de marito te, domine'. In 'mater filiorum' we may hear a resonance of Ps. 112:9.

172 It may be noted that Courcelle, *Recherches*, 192 and nn. 1 and 3, for *conf.* 8,26–27 always refers to classical texts as (possible) sources for Augustine's 'intentions littéraires'. However, it seems to me, among other things, that it is more a question of the Jewish and Christian (incl. Manichaean) doctrine of the two ways (and their accompanying virtues and vices) than of Prodicus' 'apologue célèbre' about Hercules. Also, the classical 'sources' (or in any case: striking parallels or allusions) presented by him (also on p. 191) for images in *conf.* 8,16.18.25,28 do not seem decisive to me. For instance, '*pinnae*', '*naues*', '*solitudo*' and '*uinculum*' are very common in Manichaean sources.

173 *Conf.* 8,27 (CCL 27,130): 'Et rursus illa, quasi diceret: "Obsurdesce aduersus immunda illa membra tua super terram, ut mortificentur. Narrant tibi delectationes, sed non sicut lex domini dei tui". In the second part of the quote one may hear Ps. 118 (Hebr. 119):85.

174 *Ep. Sec.* 3 (CSEL 25,897); cf. for an interpretation of his expression 'quae corpora mortificarent' e.g. J. van Oort, '*Secundini Manichaei Epistula*: Roman Manichaean 'Biblical' Argument in the Age of Augustine' (2001, repr. 2012), now in *Mani and Augustine* (n. 28), 322–334 (333).

175 'Mortificate ergo membra vestra quae sunt super terram: fornicationem, immunditiam, libidinem, concupiscentiam malam ...'. Often this text and similar ones (e.g. Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22,24) constituted the scriptural basis of the Manichaean dualistic doctrine of the 'old man' versus the 'new man'. For this doctrine in various Manichaean sources, see e.g. H.-

Lastly, I think it is typical that Augustine remarks near the end of our entire section:

Ista controuersia in corde meo non nisi de me ipso aduersus me ipsum.¹⁷⁶

This struggle¹⁷⁷ took place within my heart: it was nothing else than the inner battle about myself against myself.

The battle of flesh and spirit, the struggle between the old and the new man, takes place (as it does with the Manichaeans) in his heart. However, it is not a struggle of two opposing *naturae* or *substantiae*, but ‘only about myself against myself’.

3.7 *Augustine’s Conversion 1 (conf. 8,28)*

Conf. 8,28–30 is commonly seen as the section dealing with Augustine’s ultimate conversion. An extraordinary amount of meanings has been put forward about these paragraphs. I do not intend to reproduce all these opinions in any way whatsoever. Nor is it my intention to provide a full commentary. Our focus is on the possible Manichaean elements in this last part of Book 8, which is also the final part—as well as the culmination—of Augustine’s conversion *narratio*. We will do so by looking at each paragraph and its relevant details separately.

3.7.1 The Profound Reflection

The first sentence of *conf.* 8,28 seems to contain several clues that may point to Manichaean terms and concepts:

Vbi uero a fundo arcano alta consideratio traxit et congegessit totam miseriam meam in conspectu cordis mei, oborta est procella ingens ferens ingentem imbrem lacrimarum.¹⁷⁸

J. Klimkeit, ‘Die manichäische Lehre vom alten und neuen Menschen’, in G. Wießner & H.-J. Klimkeit (eds.), *Studia Manichaica*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1992, 131–150.

¹⁷⁶ *Conf.* 8,27 (CCL 27,130).

¹⁷⁷ Emphasis is usually placed on the fact that, at least in classical Latin, ‘*controuersia*’ is ‘a rhetorical term for an argument usually in a forensic context’ (so Hammond, *Augustine, Confessions, Books 1–8*, 406 n.). The best translation is then ‘debate’ or ‘dispute’. For my rendering of ‘*controuersia*’ I refer (with Blaise, *Dictionnaire*, 218 s.v.) to *ciu.* 13,13: ‘tunc ergo coepit caro concupiscere aduersus spiritum, cum qua *controuersia* nati sumus’.

¹⁷⁸ *Conf.* 8,28 (CCL 27,130).

When, indeed, from a hidden depth, a profound reflection had dredged up and brought together all my misery before the sight of my heart, a mighty storm arose, bringing a heavy rain of tears.

'*Alta consideratio*' has generally been translated as '*this* profound reflection'. Such a translation could be correct, because the foregoing paragraphs describe an inner struggle in which reflection does take place. However, it seems key to pay attention to the words '*in conspectu cordis mei*'.

Conspectus likely refers to *aspectus* in *conf.* 8,16: '*et si conabar a me auertere aspectum ...*: and if I tried to turn *the sight* from me ...'. Moreover, in *conf.* 8,16 the context reads:

et constituebas me *ante faciem meam* (...) et tu me rursus *opponebam mihi*
et impingebas me *in oculos meos*, ut inuenirem iniquitatem et odissem.¹⁷⁹

And You set me *before my face* (...) and You once again placed me *in front of myself* and you pressed me *in my own eyes* so that I should discover my iniquity and hate it.

In short, then and now Augustine reports that he is placed '*in conspectu cordis mei*', which *consideratio* exposes all his miserable iniquity. Both cases seem to deal with the same 'profound reflection' that may well be reminiscent of the Manichaean Bêma Festival.¹⁸⁰

3.7.2 The Tears

The said Festival with its 'liturgy' also seems to be evoked by Augustine's mention of an '*ingentem imbrem lacrimarum*'. Tears were of great significance in Manichaeism; one of Mani's writings even goes by the name 'Book of Tears'.¹⁸¹ Earlier the *Confessiones* reported that a former Manichaean, now Catholic bishop, very characteristically said to Monnica that a child of *such* tears (*istae lacrimae*) cannot be lost.¹⁸² The redeeming import of tears is not least emphasized in the context of the Bêma Festival:

Blessed are thy [sc. Mani's] loved ones that shed their tears
for thee.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ *Conf.* 8,16 (CCL 27,123–124).

¹⁸⁰ See above, e.g. pp. 128–133.

¹⁸¹ Cf. e.g. *Psalm of the Bêma* 241, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 47,1: 'the weeping'.

¹⁸² *Conf.* 3,21 (CCL 27,39).

¹⁸³ *Psalm of the Bêma* 241, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 44,27–28.

Look upon our **tears** that are hidden, that are seen by (?)

.....

..... spread thy mercy over us and wash us clean of [the things
which are] evil.¹⁸⁴

When Augustine further on in *conf.* 8,28 remarks that ‘the streams of his tears’ were ‘an acceptable sacrifice’ (*acceptabile sacrificium*) to God, this may be a hint reminding of the sacrificial Bêma Festival.

In the biblical and other Jewish and Christian traditions, there are hardly any texts which in such clear terms qualify ‘tears’ as a *sacrificium*; in other words, there seem to be no texts evidently stating that ‘tears’ function as a conciliatory and even atoning sacrifice on the basis of which God works salvation.¹⁸⁵ Yet this is obviously suggested here in *conf.* 8,28, as in the aforementioned episode at the end of *conf.* 3,21.

The Sogdian Confessional Form for the Elect—which in all probability was intended for the Bêma Festival—contains some words from Mani’s writings in Persian scattered throughout the text. One of these reads, in Walter Henning’s translation: ‘... seiner eignen Seele soll er sich erbarmen, und soll weinen und trauern, beten und flehen, und den Sündenerlaß *erbitten*’.¹⁸⁶ Atoning weeping most likely occurred during the Bêma Feast when the Manichaean congregation did penance and received forgiveness. At the Bêma Festival (which was a celebration of joy as well as mournful lamentation in tears)¹⁸⁷ not only gifts were offered, but also tears of repentance. In the Coptic Manichaean texts, the atoning meaning of tears is perhaps most clearly stated in one of the *Psalms of Heracleides*:

184 *Psalm of the Bêma* 241, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 45,5–8.

185 See e.g. H. Edmonds & B. Poschmann, ‘Buße’, *RAC* 2, 802–811; K. Rengstorf, ‘*klaïō, klauthmós*’ in *ThDNT* 3, 722–726, and commentaries on e.g. 2 Kings 20:5f.; 22:19f. and for instance Hos. 12:5. As regards the Western church, H. Leclercq, ‘Larmes’, *DACL* 8,1, 1400 mentions for instance the prayer ‘*pro petitione lacrymarum*’ in the classic Roman Missal in which, among other things, it runs: ‘*Gratiam Spiritus Sancti, Domine Deus, cordibus nostris clementer infunde: quae nos gemitibus lacrymarum efficiat maculas nostrorum diluere peccatorum ...*’. But this text dates from several centuries after Augustine.

186 Henning, *Manichäisches Bet- und Beichtbuch*, 36. Cf. e.g. H.-J. Klimkeit, *Hymnen und Gebete der Religion des Lichts*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag 1989, 176; *idem*, *Gnosis on the Silk Road*, New York: HarperCollins 1993, 140: ‘He should be merciful to his own soul, and he should weep and lament, pray and make supplication and ask for the forgiveness of (his) sins’.

187 Cf. e.g. Puech, *Sur le manichéisme* (n. 64), 393.

I will not stem my tears, o powerful one (*hikanós*), unless thou wipe away my sin.¹⁸⁸

3.7.3 The Fig Tree

The fact that Augustine relates that he fell under a fig tree has received much attention. How he cast himself down, he did not know (*nescio*). In the *narratio* of his conversion, the frequent occurrence of '*nescio*' stands out.¹⁸⁹ However, at the same time Augustine specifically tells that he fell under a *figus*. Some facts are apparently unimportant and therefore not remembered exactly; others are specified precisely. In principle, mentioning 'a tree' would have been sufficient, or even the simple fact that he cast himself down. In conf. 8,28 Augustine emphatically states that it was under a *figus*. What could this mean?

It has often been pointed out that the mention of a *figus* may have at least two 'biblical' meanings: (1) the Paradise story (assuming that the leaves with which humans' ancestors covered themselves were fig leaves);¹⁹⁰ (2) the story of Nathanael who was called by Jesus when he was under a fig tree (John 1:48). Pierre Courcelle has noticed that the exact wording '*sub arbore fici*' (and not, for example, '*sub ficu*' or '*sub arbore ficu*') appears in Augustine's Bible text of John 1:48.¹⁹¹ This is indeed a strong argument for seeing the *figus* in conf. 8,28 as a symbol of *sexual* sin, since Augustine himself reports this (in his view) biblical-exegetical meaning of John 1:48 (in concert with Gen. 3:7) repeatedly.¹⁹² In this way a real fact is reported here, which *factum* refers to a *mysterium*.¹⁹³

But is there also a special 'Manichaean' meaning? In other words: how would a Manichaean reader have understood the story related here?

In Manichaean literature and art the image of the tree plays an important role, most of all the two trees illustrating the existence of the Kingdom of Light

188 *Psalm of Heracleides* [without number], Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 188,13. It may also be noted that the next verse speaks of '[my] offering (*prospchorá*)'.

189 *Conf.* 8,14.15.19.28 (2×).29.30.

190 Which was also Augustine's opinion. Cf. e.g. *Io. eu. tr.* 7,21 (CCL 36,79): 'In origine humani generis Adam et Eua cum peccassent, de foliis *ficulneis* succinctoria sibi fecerunt; folia ergo *ficulnea* intelleguntur peccata'.

191 See e.g. his contribution to the discussion following the report by Chr. Mohrmann on 'Problèmes philologiques et littéraires' in *Augustinus Magister*, 3, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1955, 45.

192 Courcelle, *Recherches*, 193–194 n. 2; cf. e.g. V. Buchheit, 'Augustinus unter dem Feigenbaum (zu Conf. VIII)', *VC* 22 (1968) 257–271 (260–261).

193 Cf. e.g. Chr. Mohrmann, 'Conziderazioni sulle "Confessioni" di sant'Agostino' (1957/1959), in *eadem*, *Études sur le latin des chrétiens*, 11, Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura 1961, 277–323, esp. 308.

and the Kingdom of Darkness.¹⁹⁴ The fig tree and its fruits were important in Manichaean doctrine and rite as well.

In *conf.* 3,18, Augustine indicates the special significance of the *figus* when he tells that—as a young Manichaean—he was led to the foolish belief (*ad eas nugas!*) that, ‘when a fig is plucked, its *mother* also weeps milky tears.’¹⁹⁵

Quite often he also mentions the *figus* and its fruit in the second part of *The Morals of the Catholic Church and the Morals of the Manichaeans*. These twin treatises (Rome 387/8–Thagaste 388/9) reveal much of what Augustine, especially in his practice as a Hearer caring for the Elect, has learned. ‘A soft green fig’ will be appreciated as a food;¹⁹⁶ something of God dwells ‘in figs more than in a liver fattened by figs’;¹⁹⁷ according to the Manichaeans, fruits plucked from trees (such as figs) or uprooted from the ground are best consumed as soon as they are picked.¹⁹⁸ It is also noted that the Manichaeans consider such fruits to be ‘separated from the earth, as though from their *mother*’.¹⁹⁹

Interesting, too, is the ethical problem Augustine raises in *mor.* 2,57: how is it possible that Hearers in gathering fruits and vegetables for the Elect are allowed to commit a crime (*scelus*)? And what if those Elect when they walk through the field see that a raven (*coruus*) is about to eat a fig (*figus*)? ‘Does not, according to your opinion, the fig itself seem to address you and beg in a mournful manner that you yourself should pluck it and bury it in your holy belly to be purified and resuscitated, rather than that the raven should swallow it and mingle it with his deadly body, and transmit it to be bound and crucified in other forms?’²⁰⁰

From all these examples it is evident that the *figus* was very important to the Manichaeans in young Augustine’s environment and thus also to himself. It may not be coincidental that he reports that in earlier times (one may sup-

194 See e.g. V. Arnold-Döben, *Die Bildersprache des Manichäismus*, Köln: In Kommission bei E.J. Brill 1978, 7–40.

195 *Conf.* 3,18 (CCL 27,37): ‘... sensim atque paulatim perductus ad eas nugas, ut crederem ficum plorare, cum decerpitur, et *matrem* eius arborem lacrimis lacteis?’ See for the rest of the important text n. 205 below.

196 *Mor.* 2,41 (CSEL 90,125): ‘... mitem ac uiridem ficum ...’.

197 *Mor.* 2,40 (CSEL 90,124): ‘... aliquid dei ... magis [habitat] in fico quam in ficato ...’.

198 *Mor.* 2,43 (CSEL 90,128).

199 *Mor.* 2,43 (CSEL 90,128): ‘... postquam a terra quasi a *matre* separata sunt’.

200 *Mor.* 2,57 (CSEL 90,140): ‘Nonne ex opinione tua ficus ipsa tecum loqui et deprecari miserabiliter uidetur, ut eam ipse decerpas et sancto uentre purificandam resuscitandamque sepelias potius, quam coruus ille deuoratam funesto corpori misceat atque in alias formas illigandam cruciandamque transmittat?’

pose in Carthage) 'I frequently attended the discussions of a saint (*sanctus*, i.e., an Elect) in the quarter of the *fig* sellers (*in ficariorum uicum*).'²⁰¹

In all probability it may be assumed that the explicit mention of a *ficus* in *conf.* 8,28 had an extra meaning for Manichaean readers. Whether they knew Nathanael's story is not known from the sources available to us;²⁰² nor whether the fig leaves of Genesis 3:7 had any special meaning in their texts.²⁰³ But it is certain that the *ficus* had an important place in their daily 'work of the religion' (i.e., the offering of alms by the *auditores* to the *electi*) and also in their yearly Bêma Festival.

As regards their daily ritual meal: one of the Manichaean miniatures found in the ruins of Central Asian Kotcho²⁰⁴ shows in the foreground a bowl filled with figs. These figs are apparently offered to the Elect to be freed from their divine elements of light, a ritual mentioned by Augustine in *conf.* 3,18.²⁰⁵ This daily offering may be one of the reasons for the frequent references to figs in the recently excavated Manichaean texts from Egyptian Kellis.²⁰⁶

For the all-important yearly Bêma Festival one may assume the offering of figs, too. Another well-known miniature, also from Kotcho and already dealt with in our discussion of Ponticianus' role and the Manichaean *xweštr*, is generally believed to be a depiction of the Bêma Festival.²⁰⁷ Right in the center one

201 *Mor.* 2,72 (CSEL 90,152): 'An uero illius etiam sancti, ad cuius disputationes in ficariorum uicum uentitabamus ...'.

202 Cf. e.g. N.A. Pedersen, R. Falkenberg, J.M. Larsen, C. Leurini, *The New Testament Gospels in Manichaean Tradition* (CFM, Biblia Manichaica 11), Turnhout-Aarhus: Brepols 2020, 284 (i.e., no mention of any text between John 1:33 and 1:51).

203 Cf. e.g. *idem*, *eadem*, *The Old Testament in Manichaean Tradition* (CFM, Biblia Manichaica 1), Turnhout-Aarhus: Brepols 2017, 36–45 (i.e., a collection of allusions to Gen. 3:1–7).

204 See e.g. Le Coq, *Miniaturen*, Taf. 7a (discussion 45–46); Klimkeit, *Manichaean Art and Calligraphy*, Plate xvii, Ill. 28 (discussion 39–40); Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art*, 83–86; and especially Zs. Gulácsi, 'An Experiment in Digital Reconstruction with a Manichaean Book Painting: *The Work of the Religion Scene* (MIK III 4974 recto)', in J.D. BeDuhn (ed.), *New Light on Manichaeism. Papers from the Sixth International Congress on Manichaeism*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2009, 145–168 (+ 1 Plate & 10 Figures) and *eadem*, *Mani's Pictures* (n. 104), 321–324. The usual signature of the fragment of the folio now is: MIK III 4974 recto.

205 *Conf.* 3,18 (CCL 27,37): 'Quam tamen *ficum* si comedisset aliquis sanctus alieno sane, non suo scelere decerptam, misceret uisceribus et anhelaret de illa angelos, immo uero particulas dei gemendo in oratione atque ructando: quae particulae summi et ueri dei ligatae fuissent in illo pomo [sc. the fig], nisi electi sancti dente ac uentre soluerentur.'

206 Cf. e.g. *P. Kellis Copt.* V 22, 14–18 in I. Gardner, A. Alcock and W.-P. Funk, *Coptic Documentary Texts from Kellis*, 1, Oxford: Oxbow Books 1999 (Coptic text on p. 175, English transl. p. 178). Also e.g. *P. Kellis Copt.* VII 120, 8 and 125, 24.

207 E.g. Le Coq, *Miniaturen*, Taf. 8b: a (discussion 53–56); Klimkeit, *Manichaean Art*, Plate xiv,

sees a metallic vessel on which melons, grapes and, on top, in all probability a green *figus*.²⁰⁸

It is fairly sure that Augustine's special mention of the fig tree in *conf.* 8,28 had a special meaning for Manichaean readers.

3.7.4 The 'Wretched Cries: *cras et cras*'

There is also another remarkable aspect: Augustine tells that, under that fig tree, he uttered 'wretched cries' (*uoces miserabiles*):

Quandiu, quandiu 'cras et cras'? Quare non modo? Quare non hac hora finis turpitudinis meae?²⁰⁹

How long, how long 'tomorrow and tomorrow'? Why not now? Why not an end to my ugliness in this very hour?

The emphasis here is on '*cras et cras*'. Courcelle has pointed to a resemblance with a passage from Persius,²¹⁰ but this is far from convincing.²¹¹ Rather, Augustine's general notion of the *coruus*²¹² should be taken into account. He has a remarkably negative opinion of the raven and in many of his expressions the black raven contrasts with the white dove (*columba*).²¹³ Most telling in our context is a passage in the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*:

Frater, non tardes converti ad dominum. Sunt enim qui praeparant conversionem, et differunt, et fit in illis vox corvina: 'Cras, cras'. Corvus de arca missus non est reversus. Non quaerit deus dilationem in voce corvina, sed confessionem in gemitu columbino. Missa columba reversa est. Quamdiu 'cras, cras'? Observa ultimum cras. Quia ignoras quod sit ultimum cras, sufficiat quod vixisti usque ad hodiernum peccator.²¹⁴

Ill. 21 (discussion 33–34); Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art*, 70–75. The current signature of the fragment: MIK III 4979 verso.

208 Cf. J. van Oort, 'Another Case of "Human Semen Eucharist" among the Manichaeans? Notes on the "Ceremony of the Fig" in Cyril of Jerusalem's *Catechesis* VI' (2016), now in *idem*, *Mani and Augustine* (n. 28), 79–88 (87–88).

209 *Conf.* 8,28 (CCL 27,131).

210 Courcelle, *Recherches*, 192 n. 3 and 456; cf. *idem*, 'Les "Voix" dans les Confessions de S. Augustin', *Hermes* 80 (1952) 31–46, partly in response to the critique of Chr. Mohrmann in *VC* 5 (1951) 249–254.

211 Cf. e.g. H. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, II, Göteborg: Almqvist & Wiksell 1967, 472 n. 2.

212 The raven and not the crow (= *cornix*)!

213 Cf. e.g. D. Lau, 'Coruus', *AL* 2 (1996–2002) 53–56.

214 *En. Ps.* 102,16 (CSEL 95/1,97).

Brother, do not delay in *converting* to the Lord. There are people who prepare for their *conversion*, but they put it off. The voice of the raven cries in them '*cras, cras*'. A raven was sent out from the ark and did not return. God does not want the delaying of the raven's cry but the *confession* in the dove's groaning. The dove that was sent out has returned. How long will you cry 'tomorrow, tomorrow'? Watch out for that last 'tomorrow'. Because you do not know when the last 'tomorrow' will be, let it be enough that you have lived as a sinner until today.

The '*cras et cras*' in *conf.* 8,28 apparently intends to recall the *vox coruina* and thus the *dilatatio* instead of the *conuersio*. I venture to suggest that the *coruus* and the *ficus* may be so closely related in our paragraph as they are connected in the ethical dilemma story of *mor.* 2,57. It is likely that the special mention of the *lacrimae* and the *ficus* as well as the *voces miserabiles* which evidently recall a *coruus* will have evoked special associations for Manichaean readers. Within the entire complex of his *narratio*, Augustine seems to have deliberately envisaged those possible Manichaean identifications.

3.8 *Augustine's Conversion 2 (conf. 8,29)*

Conf. 8,29 can probably be considered the culmination of Augustine's conversion *narratio*. In any case, what is told here is the most famous and, curiously, at the same time the most debated part. Interestingly, it also seems to be the section where Manichaean terms, concepts and even parallels from Manichaean art play an important role.

3.8.1 '*Ecce*'

Very much discussed is the sentence:

Et ecce audio uocem de uicina domo cum cantu dicentis et crebro repetentis quasi pueri an puellae, nescio: 'tolle lege, tolle lege'.²¹⁵

And see, I hear a voice from the nearby house that said in song and often repeated, as if of a boy or a girl, I don't know: 'take up and read, take up and read'.

The Latin sentence is not easy to translate, but I hope to have rendered Augustine's phrasing as literally and faithfully as possible. The first words which

²¹⁵ *Conf.* 8,29 (CCL 27,131).

stand out are: *'Et ecce: and see'*. In the *Confessiones*, *'ecce'* and *'et ecce'* occur many times and thus in a conspicuous way.²¹⁶ The reason for this frequent occurrence could be Augustine's narrative style as well as his colloquial speech.²¹⁷ However, many cases do not (fully) fit in.

In his Nijmegen dissertation on the style of the *Confessiones*, Melchior Verheijen mentioned a few examples of *(et) ecce* and compared them with biblical examples.²¹⁸ At first glance, these seem conclusive comparisons: the expression 'see!, lo! behold!' occurs quite often in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation; in the Latin Psalms the adverb *ecce* appears over thirty times. Both in those Psalms and elsewhere it is often the translation of the Hebrew *lo* or *hen* or *hinneh*, or of the Greek *idouí* in the Septuagint.

However, there also seems to be another candidate for Augustine's frequent use: much more than in the possible sources mentioned, the adverb *eis* ('see!, lo! behold!') occurs in the Coptic Manichaean Psalms, not least in the *Psalms of the Béma*, the *Psalmoi Sarakôtôn* and the *Psalms to Jesus*.²¹⁹ Could it possibly be that Augustine was *also* (and maybe *especially*) inspired by the Manichaean Psalms for his frequent and often so characteristic use of *'ecce'* in the *Confessions*?

3.8.2 The Voice and the Manichaean Call and Answer

The next word that calls our attention is *'uox'*. Augustine's conversion story is famous not least because a (divine or divine-like) voice is heard in it. Are there any examples of such a decisive voice in the foregoing Christian tradition? If any, they are difficult to find and harmonize with Augustine's specific situation. Most striking as a parallel is still the conversion of the apostle Paul, but his

²¹⁶ See *conf.* 1,5,7,8,9,12,22,24,27; 2,8 etc., all in all ca. 116 times.

²¹⁷ Cf. e.g. Sizoo, 'Augustinus' bekeringsverhaal' (n. 15), 244 and 246; M.R. Arts, *The Syntax of the Confessions of Saint Augustine*, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America 1927, 72–73. C.I. Balmus, *Étude sur le style de saint Augustin dans les Confessions et la Cité de Dieu*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1930, 143 refers to '(et) ecce' in some passages of the *conf.* in the context of his discussion of 'parataxe au lieu d'hypotaxe' in his third chapter 'La construction de la phrase' and (only) remarks: 'Souvent saint Augustin introduit la parataxe par « et ecce »'.

²¹⁸ M. Verheijen, *Eloquentia pedisequa. Observations sur le style des Confessions de St. Augustin*, Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt 1949, 139–140: 'Un lecteur de la Bible est habitué à y trouver fréquemment un *ecce* ou un *et ecce*' (140). Curiously, G.N. Knauer, *Psalmenzitate in Augustins Konfessionen*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1955, does not elaborate on *'ecce'* or *'et ecce'*, not even in his section 'Einzelne Worte und Ausdrücke' (75–79) or his chapter 'Augustins Behandlung der Psalmenzitate in den Konfessionen' (177–191).

²¹⁹ See for *eis* e.g. Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 7,18; 8,14 (2×); 12,33; 13,15,20,21,22,23; etc.

experience of a voice²²⁰ seems best to be understood from the Jewish (especially later rabbinic) tradition in which the *bath qol* (i.e., literally, 'the daughter of the voice') plays a central role.

In accordance with his custom, Courcelle has tried to bring forward parallels from Augustine's other writings and from classical sources.²²¹ His parallels abound, but I do not find any of them convincing. Rather, I assume that in this case the preceding Jewish and (Jewish-) Christian traditions deserve particular attention. This then also goes for possible Manichaean sources: how did Manichaean Christians think about a (divine) revelatory voice and how could Manichaean readers have understood the sudden voice in Augustine's conversion narrative?

From the *Cologne Mani Codex* it became clear that young Mani (who grew up in a Jewish-Christian group of Elkesaites) often heard a voice.²²² As a rule this revelatory voice is described as coming from his Sýzygos or heavenly Twin,²²³ who is generally identified with the Paraclete promised by Jesus and also with Jesus himself.²²⁴ It could be that this precise voice tradition was somehow known to Augustine, although this is rather unlikely: except for Mani's Passion (which was, in any case, recounted at the Bêma Festival as testified by Augustine himself²²⁵ and documented by many *Psalms of the Bêma*) almost nothing was known to him about the earthly life of the prophet from Babylon.

Yet another and far more important tradition must have been well known to Augustine in several forms. It is the phenomenon of the Call and Answer which is central to Manichaean myth and ritual. One of the clearest descriptions can be found in the *Liber scholiorum* of the eighth century 'Nestorian' bishop Theodor bar Konai. The great value of his Syriac *Book of Scholia* (c. 791–792 CE) is that it contains extracts from original Syriac writings of Mani himself. About Primal Man it reads in Mani's myth according to Theodore:

Da rief der Lebendige Geist mit seiner Stimme. Die Stimme des Lebendigen Geistes aber wurde einem scharfen Schwert gleich, machte offenbar

220 According to Luke's Acts 9:4; 22:7; 26:14.

221 E.g. in Appendice III: 'Les "voix" dans les *Confessions*' in his *Recherches*, 291–310, esp. 299–310. But see also for some broader perspectives several chapters in Courcelle, *Les Confessions de saint Augustin dans la tradition littéraire. Antécédents et Postérité*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1963, esp. 127–136; 136–141; 142–154; 155–163; 179–189.

222 See e.g. *CMC* 13; 57; 86. Cf. e.g. J. van Oort, 'The Paraclete Mani as the Apostle of Jesus Christ and the Origins of a New Church' (2004), now in *idem, Mani and Augustine* (n. 28), 19–36.

223 See also e.g. *Kephalaia* 14,32 ff. and 15,22 ff.

224 Examples of the latter identification e.g. in *Psalm-Book* 166,33–34.

225 Most evidently in c. *ep.fund.* 8 (*CSEL* 25, 203).

die Gestalt des ersten Menschen und sprach zu ihm:

Heil sei dir,
du Guter unter den Bösen,
du Licht in der Finsternis,
du Gott, der wohnt unter den Tieren des Zorns,
die ihre Ehre nicht kennen!

Darauf **antwortete** ihm der Erste Mensch und sprach:

Komme in Frieden,
der du bringst die Fracht
von Frieden und Heil!

Da sagte er zu ihm:

Wie geht es unseren Vätern,
den Söhnen des Lichts, in ihrer Stadt?

Da antwortete ihm **der Ruf**:

Es geht ihnen gut.

Dann gingen miteinander **der Ruf** und **die Antwort** und stiegen empor zur Mutter des Lebens und zum Lebendigen Geist. Der Lebendige Geist legte **den Ruf** an, und die Mutter des Lebens legte **die Antwort** an, ihren lieben Sohn. Dann stiegen sie hinab zum Lande der Finsternis, wo der erste Mensch und seine Söhne waren.²²⁶

After, among other things, an exposition of the myth of the Seduction of the Archons (which was so well-known to Augustine)²²⁷ it runs:

Weiter sagte er [sc. Mani]: Es nahte sich der glänzende Jesus dem naiven Adam und erweckte ihn vom Todesschlaf, damit er erlöst werde von vielen Geistern. Wie es steht, wenn ein Gerechter, der einen anderen besessen von einem starken Dämon findet und ihn durch seine Kunst austreibt, so war es auch mit Adam, weil der Freund ihn fand, wie er in tiefen Schlaf versunken war. Er weckte ihn, gab ihm Bewegung, machte ihn

²²⁶ Theodore bar Konai, *Liber scholiorum*, ed. A. Scher (CSCO 69), Paris: Carolus Poussielgue 1912, 314–315, transl. Böhlig, *Manichäismus* (n. 117), 104–105. Other translations of this passage in e.g. A.V.W. Jackson, *Researches in Manichaeism*, New York: Columbia University Press 1932, 229–231 (transl. by A. Yohannan, elucidations by Jackson); Adam, *Texte* (n. 117), 18; Reeves, *Prolegomena* (n. 117), 148. Cf. e.g. Puech, *Sur le manichéisme* (n. 64), 39–40 who refers for his rendering to a translation by H.H. Schaefer.

²²⁷ See e.g. *nat. b.* 44 (CSEL 25, 881–884) and n. 294 below.

munter und trieb den Irrgeist aus ihm. Durch ihn fesselte er die zahlreiche Archontenschaft. Darauf prüfte Adam sich selbst und erkannte, wer er war.²²⁸

For Mani and his followers, the calling of Primal Man was the archetype of all subsequent redemptive callings. In the quotation just given, we see this archetype again in the calling of the 'historical' Adam. The quote also reveals something extra: for Mani the Call is personified in *Jesus*, who a little further in the narrative about Adam is also referred to as 'the Friend'.

It is not my intention to elaborate in all detail on the typically 'gnostic' aspects in this account, such as, in particular: Adam's 'sleep of death'; his 'awakening'; his attainment of self-knowledge. One may wonder to what extent Augustine exactly knew about all this.²²⁹ Most important is the fact that Adam is approached by Jesus (according to the myth this is Jesus the Splendour, one of the several manifestations of Jesus Christ in Manichaeism doctrine)²³⁰ and that this Jesus is the personification of the saving Intellect or Nous. It is also important to note that—as Theodore further relates from Mani's writing—Adam 'saw' his miserable condition, 'wept', 'screamed with a loud voice', 'ripped out his hair' and 'struck his chest'.²³¹ Several of these elements may be rediscovered in Augustine's account: he gained insight into his misery;²³² he wept;²³³ he screamed with a loud voice.²³⁴ Earlier in his *narratio* Augustine also hinted at 'pulling out his hair' and 'hitting his forehead'.²³⁵

228 Theodore bar Konai, *Liber scholiorum* (ed. Scher), 317; Böhlig, *Manichäismus*, 107. Cf. Jackson, *Researches*, 249–252; Adam, *Texte*, 22; Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 151.

229 In any case, he says that he was aware of their 'long fable' ('longa fabula est') about Adam and Eve and e.g. communicates that, according to the Manichaeans, the light parts dominated the make-up of Adam: see *mor.* 2,73 (*CSEL* 90,153). Cf. e.g. *c. ep. Man.* 11,13 (*CSEL* 25,208: part of a fairly long quote from Mani's *Fundamental Letter*) and the brief note in *haer.* 46 (*CCL* 46,317).

230 See e.g. E. Rose, *Die manichäische Christologie*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1979, esp. ch. 4.

231 Theodore bar Konai, *Liber scholiorum* (ed. Scher), 318. Cf. Böhlig, *Manichäismus*, 108; Jackson, *Researches*, 253 (who in n. 145 provides an interesting overview of the quite different translations and thus interpretations previously given by specialists such as H. Pognon, F. Cumont and H.-H. Schaeder); Adam, *Texte*, 22–23; Reeves, *Prolegomena*, 152.

232 *Conf.* 8,28 (*CCL* 27,130): 'Vbi uero a fundo arcano alta consideratio traxit et congressit totam miseriam meam in conspectu cordis mei ...'.

233 *Conf.* 8,28 (*CCL* 27,130–131): '... oborta est procella ingens, ferens ingentem imbrem lacrimarum'; '... et dimisi habenas lacrimis ...'; *conf.* 8,29 (*CCL* 27,131): 'et flebam amarissima contritione cordis mei ...'.

234 *Conf.* 8,28 (*CCL* 27,130–131): 'Et ut totum effunderem cum uocibus suis ...'; '... multa dixi tibi ...'; 'lactabam uoces miserabiles ...'; *conf.* 8,29 (*CCL* 27,131): 'Dicebam haec ...'.

235 *Conf.* 8,20 (*CCL* 27,126): 'Si uulsi capillum, si percussi frontem ...'.

My brethren, let us pray with a great prayer
 30 *illegible*.
 of your
 one another. Ye Catechumens, repent (*metanoēn*) in
 praying with a great prayer²⁴⁰

Here the salvific Call and Answer are identified with the salvific Bêma. It is also noticeable that the exhortation to conversion sounds twice, at the end specifically addressed to the Catechumens, i.e., the Auditors.

The fact that the Auditors must have been very well informed about the central salvation concept of Call and Answer is also evident from other texts. In the Old Turkish confessional form for the Auditors, the *Xwāstwānīft*, the divine entities Call and Answer (*Xrōštag* and *Padvāxtag*) are explicitly mentioned.²⁴¹ In a confessional prayer in the Chinese Hymnscroll, the Auditors are summoned to bend their knees, to confess, and to pray to (among others) *Kuan-yin* and *Shi-chih*, i.e., Call and Answer.²⁴²

3.8.3 Courcelle on the Voice

In his initial *Recherches* and even more so in his later added essay 'Les "voix" dans les *Confessions*', Courcelle expresses a debatable view on the *uox in conf.* 8,29. Based on Augustine's remark towards the end of *conf.* 8,27 that the battle between 'the old girlfriends' and Continentia takes place in his heart,²⁴³ he assumes that what follows in *conf.* 8,28 and the beginning of *conf.* 8,29 only concerns an internal event.²⁴⁴ In the initial *Recherches* it reads:

La voix de garçon ou de fille qui répète *Tolle, lege*, constitue la suite de ce rêve intérieur et n'a pas de réalité matérielle.²⁴⁵

In 'Appendice III' it runs:

240 *Bêma Psalm* 235, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 32,14–26; 33,17–28.

241 *Xwāstwānīft*, Ch. XI A; see e.g. Asmussen, *X'UĀSTVĀNĪFT* (n. 36), 197.

242 See e.g. Waldschmidt-Lentz, *Stellung Jesu*, 123 (cf. 9); Böhlig, *Manichäismus* (n. 117), 207; H. Schmidt-Glinterz, *Chinesische Manichaica. Mit textkritischen Anmerkungen und einem Glossar*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1987, 62.

243 *Conf.* 8,27 (CCL 27,130): 'Ista controuersia in corde meo non nisi de me ipso aduersus me ipsum'.

244 Courcelle, *Recherches*, 195 and 'Appendice III: 'Les "voix" dans les *Confessions*' (n. 210), 299–310.

245 Courcelle, *Recherches*, 195.

Et le fameux '*Tolle, lege*'? Selon que l'on adopte la leçon commune: '*de uicina domo*', ou la leçon du seul manuscrit précarolingien, le *Sessori-anus*: '*de diuina domo*', l'on sera porté à considérer qu'il s'agit d'une voix extérieure, humaine, ou d'une voix intérieure, d'origine divine. La première hypothèse a d'ordinaire été retenue; j'ai, au contraire, soutenu et développé la seconde: selon moi, cette voix d'un *puer* ou d'une *puella* (*quae pueri an puellae, nescio*) émane de l'un des *pueri et puellae*, enfants de Contenance mentionnés à la page précédente.²⁴⁶

I believe I may disagree with Courcelle on at least two essential points. First: it does not seem to me that the '*controversia in corde meo*' of *conf.* 8,27 also fully relates to *conf.* 8,28 and the beginning of *conf.* 8,29. On the contrary: Augustine reports that—after his inner consideration and confrontation had caused a storm and a flood of tears²⁴⁷—he moved away from Alypius because (as Alypius noticed!) he had 'said something or another, the sound of my voice betraying my rising tears'.²⁴⁸ Shortly thereafter, he also reports that he 'spoke' to God 'at length' and 'uttered wretched cries'.²⁴⁹ *Conf.* 8,29 then opens with: 'I went on speaking like this and wept in the bitterest crush of my heart'.²⁵⁰ It seems to me that—like the physical-material tears—the words Augustine uttered were said and could be heard physically-materially.

Perhaps even more essential in this context is my objection to Courcelle's distinction between 'une voix extérieure, humaine' and 'une voix intérieure, d'origine divine'. Does such a distinction really concur with Augustine's narration? And is a divine (or divine-like) voice indeed only internal to him? Almost innumerable examples could be cited from his oeuvre in which, in response to biblical theophanies and angelophanies, he interprets such a voice as exterior, material and at the same time of divine origin. Courcelle however believes—

246 Courcelle, 'Appendice III: 'Les "voix" dans les *Confessions*', 299.

247 *Conf.* 8,28 (CCL 27,130): 'Vbi uero a fundo arcano alta consideratio traxit et congescit totam miseriam meam in conspectu cordis mei, oborta est procella ingens ferens ingentem imbrem lacrimarum'.

248 *Ibidem*: 'Et ut totum [sc. imbrem lacrimarum] effunderem cum uocibus suis, surrexi ab Alypio—solitudo mihi ad negotium flendi aptior suggerebatur—et secessi remotius, quam ut posset mihi onerosa esse etiam eius praesentia. Sic tunc eram, *et ille sensit*: nescio quid enim, puto, dixeram, in quo apparebat sonus uocis meae iam fletu grauidus, et sic surrexeram.'

249 *Conf.* 8,28 (CCL 27,131): '... et non quidem his uerbis, sed in hac sententia multa dixi tibi ...'; 'tactabam uoces miserabiles ...'.

250 *Conf.* 8,29 (CCL 27,131): 'Dicebam haec et flebam amarissima contritione cordis mei'.

partly because of his preference for the Sessorianus reading *de diuina domo*—that '*tolle, lege*' is a non-material interior voice²⁵¹ and he even concludes with regard to the event in the garden in Milan (interpreting all '*uoces*' of *conf* 8,26–29 as the same phenomena):

Selon le récit d'Augustin, c'est une scène hautement dramatique, toute en bruits ou en cris: murmures des Vanités, paroles de Continence, clameurs d'orage, cris pitoyables d'Augustin, refrain perpétuel du '*Tolle, lege*'. Toutes ces 'voix' sont des voix intérieures. Il s'agit matériellement d'une scène muette, d'une histoire sans paroles; Alypius, assis à quelques pas d'Augustin, n'a pas perçu le moindre bruit ...²⁵²

Ultimately, for Courcelle, 'la voix intérieure' which Augustine hears in Milan's garden is 'une illumination d'ordre intellectuel',²⁵³ caused by 'l'appel intérieur' instead of a physical-material voice. We will come to the fact that the voice says '*tolle lege*' in a moment.

Courcelle seems to have a strong case when he also argues that Augustine's additional remark on the *uox* 'as if of a boy or a girl, I don't know' (*quasi pueri an puellae, nescio*) refers to *conf* 8,27. However, not only boys and girls are mentioned there; the full passage speaks of 'so many boys and girls, a multitude of young people and people of every age, and grave widows and elderly virgins.'²⁵⁴ Courcelle's equation of the '*puer an puella*' with those '*isti et istae*'²⁵⁵ of *conf* 8,27 on the basis of a following sentences in which Continentia asks Augustine: 'Would not you be able to do what those [men] and those [women] could do? Or can those [men] and those [women] (*isti et istae*) sometimes do it in their own strength and not in the Lord their God',²⁵⁶ is therefore incorrect. '*Isti et istae*' does not just refer to boys and girls; '*quasi pueri an puellae*' does not

251 For his identification of 'humaine' with 'matériel' and 'réel' and thus interpreting 'divine' as being non-material, see e.g. 'Les "voix"', 303; 306 n. 4; 307 n. 3.

252 Courcelle, 'Les "voix"', 307.

253 Courcelle, *ibidem*. Cf. 'Les "voix"', 308–310, in the end equating this 'illumination d'ordre intellectuel' with Augustine's discovery of 'le Bien des Néoplatoniciens'.

254 *Conf* 8,27 (CCL 27,130): 'Ibi tot pueri et puellae, ibi iuuentus multa et omnis aetas et graues uiduae et uirgines anus ...'.

255 Courcelle, 'Les "voix"', 310: 'Ceci ne confirme-t-il pas l'hypothèse que j'ai émise, selon laquelle le '*Tolle, lege*', cri comme de garçon ou de fille, je ne sais (*quasi pueri an puellae, nescio*) traduit de façon dramatique l'appel intérieur que lui adressèrent les garçons et filles de Continence (*pueri et puellae; isti et istae*)?'.

256 *Conf* 8,27 (CCL 27,130): 'Tu non poteris, quod isti, quod istae? An uero isti et istae in se ipsis possunt ac non in domino deo suo?'.

only invoke these *continents*. Courcelle's explanation of '*quasi pueri an puellae, nescio*' is not valid.

3.8.4 The Boy or Girl

Maybe some Manichaean perspective could bring a solution here? As we have seen, in the Manichaean tradition the Call and its accompanying Answer (it is evident that Augustine answers by his decision to rigorous asceticism) frequently occur. It deserves full attention that in this tradition a boy is assigned an important role as a representative of Jesus. Moreover, it is sometimes a boy 'who says in song and often repeats'. In typical gnostic-Manichaean 'Gestaltwandlung' this boy sometimes even appears in female garb, i.e., as a girl.

Initial access to these curious Manichaean phenomena is perhaps best obtained by the already often quoted *Kephalaia of the Teacher*. This work includes a fairly well-known chapter (*Kephalaion* 7) which provides a scholastic account of the evocation of various Manichaean divinities. About the Youth or Boy (Coptic *lilou*) it runs, among other things:

The third power [whom Jesus the Splendour has called forth] is the Youth (...) I am speaking about him who has been established in the Call (*ptōhme*) and the Answer (*psōtme*).²⁵⁷

This *lilou* takes on more contours in a next chapter. *Kephalaion* 19 deals with the different phases in the redemption of the divine light. Here, too, the Youth turns out to be an emanation of Jesus the Splendour and is connected with the Call and Answer. But now the *lilou* is more precisely referred to as *Jesus* the Youth (*Iēsous plilou*).²⁵⁸ His place and function become even more distinct in *Kephalaion* 38. There it runs:

Jesus the Youth (...) who is the image (*eikōn*) of the living word, of the utterance (*ptōhme*) and the obedience (*psōtme*).²⁵⁹

The Call and Answer represent Jesus the Youth and vice versa: Jesus the Youth is the embodiment of the Call and Answer²⁶⁰ and thus of the *Enthýmēsis* of Life,

²⁵⁷ *Kephalaia* (ed. Polotsky, own transl.) 35,27–30.

²⁵⁸ *Kephalaia* (ed. Polotsky, transl. Gardner) 61,17–28. Note that line 61,26 mentions *ptōhme* and *psōtme*.

²⁵⁹ *Kephalaia* (ed. Polotsky, transl. Gardner) 92,7–8. Cf. *ptōhme* and *psōtme* in 92,2–3.

²⁶⁰ Cf. Jesus as *eikōn* in *Kephalaia* 92,8 and (perhaps) as *prósōpon* in the rather defective sentences of *Kephalaia* 35,28–29.

i.e., the active will to salvation. In other words: Jesus the Youth personifies this active will to salvation.²⁶¹

The Manichaean sources tell more. In line with the just quoted *Kephalaia* passages, Jesus is often directly referred to as 'voice', 'speech', 'word', '*sermo*'/'*logos*' (e.g. *suchun/sukōn*). Years ago, Ernst Waldschmidt and Wolfgang Lentz referred to Iranian texts and the great Chinese 'Hymn on Jesus' for these designations.²⁶² No less often does Jesus appear in various other Eastern texts as the 'Caller':

... die Stimme des **Rufers**, meines
Erweckers [...].²⁶³

Großer **Rufer**,
der diese meine Seele aus dem Schlummer erweckt [...].²⁶⁴

Du [sc. Jesus] bist der Herr,
der **Rufer** der [...].²⁶⁵

All this clearly corresponds with several passages in the later discovered (but much older) Coptic Manichaean *Psalmbook*. Especially the *Psalms to Jesus* sing about Jesus' Cry (*hrau*) and Voice (e.g. *smē*); hence they denote Jesus as the Caller, too. I mention a few examples:

When I heard the **cry** (*hrau*) of my Saviour (*sōtēr*), a power clothed
(*phoreñ*)
all my limbs (*mēlos*) (...).²⁶⁶

The joy, my Lord, of thy sweet **cry** (*hrau*) has made me forget
life (*bíos*); the sweetness of thy **voice** (*smē*) has made me remember
my city (*pólis*).

261 Thus e.g. W. Henning in F.C. Andreas-W. Henning, 'Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisich-Turkestan, III', *SPAW* 1934, 878 n. 4 (= Henning, *Selected Papers*, I [n. 37], 305).

262 See e.g. Waldschmidt & Lentz, *Stellung Jesu*, e.g. 34–35, 85 and 99. One may compare F.C. Andreas-W. Henning, 'Mitteliranische Manichaica aus Chinesisich-Turkestan, II', *SPAW* 1932, 294–363, e.g. 314 (= Henning, *Selected Papers*, I, 211): 'Zum Heil herbei, starker Gott und heiligende **Stimme**! Zum Heil herbei, wahrer **lógos** (...)':

263 Waldschmidt & Lentz, *Stellung Jesu*, 39.

264 Waldschmidt & Lentz, *Stellung Jesu*, 40.

265 Waldschmidt & Lentz, *Stellung Jesu*, 119.

266 *Psalm to Jesus* 243, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 50, 21–22.

For (*gár*) who can he saved without remission of sins?²⁶⁷

I heard the power of thy living cry (*hrau*), I followed
thee, I put down the nets of Error (*plánē*) (...).²⁶⁸

..... when I heard thy voice (*smē*), my shepherd (...).²⁶⁹

The Call of Jesus is also mentioned in several other Psalms.²⁷⁰

Typical of Gnostic texts in general and characteristic of Manichaean texts is a certain fluidity of (mythological) identification. Jesus (or some other figure from the Manichaean myth) appears in one context in a specific form and function and otherwise in another context.

So it is with the figure of Jesus the Youth. On the one hand he is an image of the active force, being the pre-eminent symbol of the Light Soul scattered in the world and crying out for redemption. On the other hand, he is also presented as an only passive image of the Light Soul suffering in the world. Such a 'duality' or 'duplexity' can also be found in the much-discussed dialogical text M 42 from Turfan: Jesus is the Saviour on the one hand; on the other hand, he is the Boy (Parth. *kumār*) who begs for salvation.²⁷¹

This change between *Salvator* and *salvanda* personified in the Boy (*lilou*) turns out to be particularly present in the Coptic *Psalms of Thomas*. Until now, they have been studied most extensively and thoroughly by Peter Nagel.²⁷² In his opinion,²⁷³ the theme of Thomas Psalm IV is the rescue of a complaining Boy (who *can* be identified as Primal Man) from the underworld by the Light-

267 *Psalm to Jesus* 245, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 53,27–29.

268 *Psalm to Jesus* 271, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 90,26–27.

269 *Psalm to Jesus* 276, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 96,15.

270 E.g. in a *chaïre-Psalm* (*Psalm-Book* 131,27) and as follows in one of the *Psalmoi Sarakōtōn* (*Psalm-Book* 154,31): 'Every voice (*phōné*) I have heard, no other voice (*smē*) pleased me save thine'. See also the 'Index Psalmorum', *Psalm-Book* 229b4.b23. For the differently (Mandaean?) set *Psalms of Thomas*, see below.

271 See e.g. Andreas & Henning, 'Mitteliranische Manichaica, 111' (n. 261), 878–881; L.J.R. Ort, *Mani. A religio-historical Description of his Personality*, Leiden: E.J. Brill 1967, 119–120 (comm. 120–121); M. Boyce, *A Reader in Manichaean Middle-Persian and Parthian*, Leiden: E.J. Brill 1975, 170–173; J.P. Asmussen, *Manichaean Literature*, New York 1975, 110–111; Puech, *Sur le manichéisme* (n. 64), 84–86; Klimkeit, *Hymnen und Gebete* (n. 186), 157–159; *idem*, *Gnosis on the Silk Road* (n. 186), 124–125; Böhlig, *Manichäismus* (n. 117), 260–262.

272 *Die Thomaspsalmen des koptisch-manichäischen Psalmenbuches*, übersetzt und erläutert von Peter Nagel, Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt 1980.

273 Nagel, *Thomaspsalmen*, 81–84.

Adamas. Quite typically for our context it is noted about this Light-Adamas in the *Kephalaia*:

Whoever will become master to his genitals and subdue his lust (*epithymía*), he is the mystery of the Adamas of Light, the one who subdues Matter (*Hýlé*).²⁷⁴

In Thomas Psalm IV, in short, the Boy is the personification of the divine Light scattered in the cosmos and bound by the darkness.

Still according to Nagel,²⁷⁵ Thomas Psalm v speaks about a different kind of *lilou*: the Boy sent by Jesus is the alter ego of the seeking soul who has already reached his goal (sc. asceticism). On the banks of the Euphrates, the narrator (i.e., the seeking soul) meets a Youth 'making music', or more precisely: a 'singing' or 'psalmodifying' (*psallein*) Boy:

He said, My heart, be a mountain (?) for me: my conscience (*syneídēsis*), grow (?) for me into a mind (*noûs*). My heart, be a mountain (?) for me. [...].²⁷⁶

Based on his reading that the soul (the ego) meets its alter ego in the Boy, Nagel concludes that the Boy can be equated with the heavenly Double, especially famous in Manichaean circles.²⁷⁷ This heavenly Double is also identified with the Light Form which appears in the hour of death to meet the Manichaean believer.

About the Light Form it runs in the *Kephalaia*:

The third [sc. power of the Light Nous] is the Light Form; the one whom the elect and the catechumens shall receive, should they renounce (*apotássesthai*) the world (*kosmós*).²⁷⁸

According to Nagel, the Boy (*lilou*), Jesus, the heavenly Double (*saiš*) and the Light Form (*tmorfē nouaïne*) are ultimately the same in their role in the Manichaean myth.

²⁷⁴ *Kephalaia* (ed. Böhlig, transl. Gardner) 172,10–13.

²⁷⁵ Nagel, *Thomaspsalmen*, 84–91.

²⁷⁶ *Psalms of Thomas* v, Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 211,18–19. What Allberry reads here as 'be a mountain' (*r-outau*), Alfred Adam previously read as [be a] 'Schutz' (*r-outak*), i.e., 'be a protection, guard, shelter, refuge'. Cf. Nagel, *Thomaspsalmen*, 42 n.

²⁷⁷ Cf. e.g. the *Sýzygos* in the Cologne Mani Codex and the *saiš* in the Coptic texts.

²⁷⁸ *Kephalaia* 36,9–11; transl. Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 40.

The *Psalms of Thomas* contain some other images of the *lilou* or *koui* ('Little One'): he resembles Primal Man in appearance and function in Thomas Psalm 1²⁷⁹ and represents the Manichaean believer in Thomas Psalm XVII.²⁸⁰ It is worth noting that also in the latter case the Boy 'psalmodies' (*psallein*).²⁸¹ 'At night' (i.e., in this evil world) he sings:

O my heart, remember the
house of [thy Father]: I will go to the house of the Living
..... my Father, out of the Land (*chōra*) of them that are far. I run,
they run after me, until I reached the Land (*chōra*) of the Living,
I bent down, I sat, I rose, I went my way: I,
the Living one, from them that are far [...].²⁸²

In this psalm the Boy is singing on his way to the Realm of Light and is taken up into it:

[...] the Living numbered me in their number
and set me down among them, Amen.²⁸³

The *Psalms of Thomas* are of a special character and—unlike the *Psalms of the Bêma*, the *Psalms of the Wanderers* and the *Psalms to Jesus*—it is not plausible that young Augustine acquired any knowledge of them. Nevertheless, such a knowledge (or in any case: some familiarity with their themes and subjects) is by no means excluded. A comment such as in *conf.* 3,14 that, as a Manichaean, he 'sang lyrical songs' and 'was not allowed to place the metrical foot where I wished, but different meters demanded different placing of the stress, and even within one particular verse the same foot was not uniform throughout',²⁸⁴ may very well apply to the rather singular *Psalms of Thomas*.²⁸⁵ Unfortunately, from

279 Cf. Nagel, *Thomaspsalmen*, e.g. 71. As far as I am aware, *koui* as a designation of the Youth occurs only in this *Thomas Psalm* 1 (Allberry, *Psalm-Book* 204,22).

280 Cf. Nagel, *Thomaspsalmen*, 120–122.

281 *Thomas Psalm* XVII (Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 223,20–21).

282 *Thomas Psalm* XVII (Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 224,3–8).

283 *Thomas Psalm* XVII (Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 224,14–15).

284 *Conf.* 3,14 (CCL 27,34): '... et cantabam carmina et non mihi licebat ponere pedem quemlibet ubilibet, sed in alio atque alio metro aliter atque aliter et in uno aliquo uersu non omnibus locis eundem pedem ...'.

285 For their special and difficult meter, see e.g. T. Säve-Söderberg, *Studies in the Coptic Manichaean Psalm-Book. Prosody and Mandaean Parallels*, Uppsala etc.: Almqvist & Wiksell 1949, esp. 41–84. On the (equally difficult) meter (and melody) of the Middle Iranian

the Latin world we do not have any complete remnant of Manichaean poetry²⁸⁶ and so only speculation is left in this regard.

Yet from elsewhere we know enough about the Manichaean figure of the Boy (and also of a Girl) that gives us an opportunity to interpret Augustine's statement about the *puer an puella*. In the Parthian text M 42 mentioned above, the Boy is an emanation of Jesus who mourns being left in the world by Jesus (the Splendour).²⁸⁷ But as an alter ego of Jesus, he has a function here, as reported to him by Jesus (the Splendour):

... this Living Self which (is) in flesh and wood you can save from Greed (Āz).²⁸⁸

It is evident that in many Manichaean texts²⁸⁹ the Boy appears in a striking way: he is directly connected with the Manichaean concept of Call and Answer; he is a direct representative of Jesus; his function is to liberate the Living Self from the Āz.

Did Augustine know this multifarious concept of Jesus the Boy (or Child) as the personification of the soul's will to redemption? Given his sometimes astonishing knowledge of Manichaean terms and concepts, I think this is quite possible. As it is also quite possible that his Manichaean readers heard all this in the *narratio* of his conversion.

Such a 'Manichaean' understanding seems to have far-reaching consequences for our interpretation of the *narratio*'s central event. It does not just mean that Augustine's conversion is a conversion to radical asceticism: this meaning is already clearly indicated by Augustine himself.²⁹⁰ It also means that *the figure of Jesus* (represented by the child and its voice) plays a central role in his conversion. The *uox* of Jesus the Child engenders the *Enthymēsis* of Life.

Monday and Bêma hymns, see e.g. Reck, *Festtagshymnen*, 61–87. Of course, it is also possible that Augustine's comment alludes to such holiday hymns or even to hymns sung on other occasions.

286 One gets a vague impression only through the so-called *Amatorium canticum*; see Augustine's *c. Faust.* 15,5–6 (*CSEL* 25,425–428).

287 E.g. Asmussen, *Manichaean Literature* (n. 271), 110: 'The honor and service shown me time after time by you, God, are obvious in all eyes. But only of this (time) I complain, when you ascended and left me behind like an orphan'.

288 Asmussen, *Manichaean Literature*, 111.

289 And perhaps also in Manichaean art; cf. e.g. Klimkeit, *Manichaean Art and Calligraphy* (n. 62), 39.

290 Cf. e.g. the beginning of his *narratio* in *conf.* 8,13 (*CCL* 27,121): 'Et de uinculo quidem desiderii concubitus ... quemadmodum me exemeris, narrabo ...'.

The Manichaean texts mention a 'Boy' or 'Child'; Augustine speaks of a 'puer an puella'.²⁹¹ Can the latter also correspond with Manichaean ways of thinking? Indeed, that may be the case. For example *Kephalaion* 19 describes how the divine Jesus (i.e., Jesus the Splendour) descended through the layers of the sky while *changing his form* to conform to each kind of being.²⁹² In this Manichaean Chapter it is said, among other things, that 'when he was revealed in the zone he displayed his image (*eikōn*) in front of the firmaments (*sterēōma*) and purified [the Light] that is above'.²⁹³ This is a clear reference to a notable episode from the Manichaean cosmogonic myth, namely the so-called 'Seduction of the Archons', which was very well known to Augustine.²⁹⁴ It tells how naked boys (*pueri*) and naked girls (*uirgines*) in *changing forms* act as agitators to release the divine light from the power of the evil archons.

In variations of the myth, instead of the *uirgines*, sometimes only one 'Virgin of Light' is mentioned, who is also known as the 'Maiden'. We already met the 'Maiden of Light';²⁹⁵ we will come back to this multifunctional 'Maiden', also called 'Mother', in a moment.

3.9 *Augustine's Conversion 3 (conf. 8,29)*

3.9.1 *'De uicina domo'*

If our previous analysis is correct, then the singular reading of the Sessorianus takes on a new meaning: 'from the divine abode' (*de diuina domo*) comes the voice of the heavenly Jesus. This does not have to be the case literally: it may be evident that for Augustine (and his readers) an ordinary voice 'from the house next door' (*de uicina domo*) as a *signum* may point to a *mysterium*:²⁹⁶ the material (and physically audible!) voice takes on the meaning (and is the bearer) of

291 It should be noted that Courcelle neither in his *Recherches* nor in the various essays in *Les Confessions dans la tradition littéraire* (n. 221) provides a plausible explanation for the fact that Augustine wrote: 'audio uocem ... quasi pueri an puellae, nescio'. That the voice could be a girl's voice is not reflected in his many references but is in fact contradicted by most of his texts which turn out to speak explicitly of a 'puer' or 'pueri'. This also (and *a fortiori*) goes for his essay 'L'enfant et les "sorts bibliques"', *vc* 7 (1953) 194–220. In fact, this essay is not about 'l'enfant' but about the occurrence of the 'puer' in various (ancient) Christian texts.

292 *Kephalaia* (ed. Polotsky) 61,17–28.

293 *Kephalaia* (ed. Polotsky, transl. Gardner) 61,17–20.

294 See e.g. *nat. b.* 44 (*CSEL* 25,881–884). This mythical episode also plays an essential role in other contexts; see e.g. my *Mani and Augustine* (n. 28), for instance 56–78 (= Ch. 5 on *haer.* 46,9–10: 'Human Semen Eucharist among the Manichaeans? The Testimony of Augustine Reconsidered in Context').

295 See above, pp. 154–155.

296 Cf. above, n. 193.

a divine call, more precisely: it is, according to certain modes of Manichaean belief, *the voice of the divine Jesus*.

3.9.2 The *codex* and the '*mensa lusoria*'

Is there more to say about this incident? The voice of the *puer* or *puella* (in Manichaean thinking: the voice of the personified desire of redemption of the soul, basically the voice of Jesus) leads to the taking up of a *codex*. Augustine's account is not complete in all detail, but we can safely assume that this is the *codex* previously lying on a gaming table (*mensa lusoria*) when Ponticianus arrived at Augustine's rented house.²⁹⁷

Apparently, Augustine took the *codex* with him into the garden and put it where he and Alypius were sitting (*sedebamus*).²⁹⁸ Augustine relates it even more precisely: he has 'laid down' the *codex*, perhaps one may even translate: he has 'positioned' the *codex*.²⁹⁹ Was it on the ground? This does not seem likely. At his (or Alypius' or their joint) seat? This does not seem likely either. I consider it very possible and even best conceivable that the gaming table (which in the house stood before him and Ponticianus)³⁰⁰ was taken outside together with the precious *codex*. The '*tolle lege*' thus acquires a more concrete dimension: 'take up /lift up³⁰¹ the *codex* from the table near you and read from it'.

As far as I can see, Courcelle has seldom mentioned the '*mensa lusoria*' in his many and detailed studies of our episode, leaving it at a simple mention.³⁰² However, in Manichaean appreciation such a small table (also to be defined according to its function as a reading table) could very well have a special meaning. Several Manichaean miniatures from Central Asia depict a small table. Jorinde Ebert in particular has drawn attention to this in a little-cited

297 *Conf.* 8,14 (*CCL* 27,121): 'Et forte supra mensam lusoriam, quae ante nos erat, attendit codicem: tulit, aperuit, inuenit apostolum Paulum, inopinate sane ...'.

298 *Conf.* 8,28 (*CCL* 27,130): 'Mansit ergo ille [sc. Alypius] ubi sedebamus nimie stupens'.

299 *Conf.* 8,29: '... redii in eum locum ubi sedebat Alypius: ibi enim posueram codicem apostoli, cum inde surrexeram'.

300 Cf. *conf.* 8,14 (above, n. 297): 'quae ante nos erat'.

301 Cf. Ponticianus' action in *conf.* 8,14 (*CCL* 27,121): 'tulit, aperuit, inuenit apostolum Paulum'. I will not elaborate here on the many parallels between the story of Antonius and that of the friends in Trier on the one hand and the events surrounding the *codex* and the reading of it by Augustine and Alypius on the other.

302 I.e., only once in 'L'enfant et les "sorts bibliques"', *VC* 7 (1953) 194–220, 215: '... puisque le *codex* se trouve sur une *mensa lusoria*, non sur la *trápèze* d'un autel chrétien'. Many elements and passages from this long study return in the various chapters of the book section 'Les descriptions de Conversion' in *Les Confessions dans la tradition littéraire* (n. 221), 89–197.

study.³⁰³ Codices on such tables are especially visible on images of the Manichaean Bêma Festival. One Bêma miniature (MIK III 8259 recto) shows two Elect with a folding table between them, and in all probability a codex lying on it. Was it Mani's Gospel? The *electus* on the left reverently holds a closed codex in his hand. Was it a confessional? The *electus* on the right makes an inviting and commanding gesture with raised right arm and right hand. Something like 'tolle lege'?

The most famous Bêma miniature (MIK III 4979 verso) also shows Elect with books in codex form, which are often assumed to be confessionals; the prominently depicted *electus* in the front level lifts his codex as if he is reading or going to read from it. At least one of the main figures on this miniature is supposed to give a signal (something like 'tolle lege?'). On the highest dais or *table* one may suppose the presence of another codex: Mani's Gospel?

On a marginal illumination (M 559), which is either an image of the Auditors' Alms Service to the Elect, or again a depiction of the Bêma Festival, one sees a folding table between two lay women on the one side and an *electa* on the other side with possibly a codex on it. Besides, the *electa* has a book (a confessional?) at her chest.

Based on the available images, I have mainly summarized data provided by Jorinde Ebert and combined them in my short overview with information from Zsuzsanna Gulácsi's *Manichaean Art in Berlin Collections*.³⁰⁴ I note that the interpretations of the images (is the Bêma Festival depicted?; is it the Alms Service?; where do we see a codex and where an unidentifiable object?) sometimes differ. It is important to note that—to speak with Ebert—also Manichaeism has become known as a 'Religion des Buches'.³⁰⁵ When Augustine's conversion story tells so prominently about a codex, such must have sounded special to Manichaean ears. It is also notable that in Manichaean art a small table is depicted as the carrier of a book, which table is remarkably similar in appearance and function to Augustine's *mensa lusoria*.³⁰⁶

303 J. Ebert, 'Darstellungen der Passion Manis in bekannten und unbekannten Bildfragmenten des Bema-Fests aus der Turfan-Sammlung', in *Memoriae Munusculum. Gedenkband für Annemarie v. Gabain*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 1994, 1–28.

304 Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art in Berlin Collections* (n. 62).

305 Ebert, 'Darstellungen', 27: 'Für jeden einzelnen war daher die Darbringung seines Sündenbekenntnisses eines der wichtigsten Ereignisse vor dem Bema-Fest. Wenn daher die Manichäer von den anderen Glaubensrichtungen als "Anhänger der Religion des Buches" bezeichnet werden, so deutet dies weniger auf die Schriften Manis hin, als auf ihren Brauch, Sündenbekenntnisse in Büchern vor Mani zu bringen'.

306 One may compare *mensae lusoriae* found in Pompeii (see e.g. P.E. Allison, *Pompeian Households. An Analysis of the Material Culture*, Los Angeles: Cotzen Institute of Archae-

A last observation here on Augustine's codex and his reading from it. Evidently this is a codex containing the corpus Paulinum. Among several other codices, one such codex (or the same one) plays a role in Augustine's debate with the Manichaean Felix.³⁰⁷ Probably much earlier Augustine had several similar codices in his possession.³⁰⁸ From his own copy of the corpus Paulinum he does not read like the Manichaeans a Paul purified of evident Jewish elements, but the 'real and whole' Paul. It is quite conceivable that the Manichaeans also read their Paul from a separate book collection, one that may have been especially present at Manichaean religious gatherings. Even the Manichaeans of Central Asia were familiar with (their) Paul.³⁰⁹

3.9.3 'Tolle lege'

Three final remarks may conclude this section. First an additional note on '*tolle lege*'. Neither in Manichaean texts (nor in 'secular' classical or other early Christian or Jewish texts) have I found the expression literally. The best parallel so far is probably the one in Marcus Diaconus' *Vita Porphyrii*, but this is a text from a time shortly after Augustine's conversion.³¹⁰ As we have seen, from the Manichaean miniature representations of the Bêma Festival and other religious gatherings, reading a codex after a '*tolle lege*' call is quite conceivable. Several other Manichaean texts also show a direct link between singing, reciting and reading.³¹¹ After all attempts to understand '*tolle lege*', an explanation from a Manichaean setting seems to have the best credentials.

ology, University of California 2004, e.g. 142) with Augustine's table and the said depictions in Manichaean art.

307 See e.g. c. *Fel.* 1,7 ff. (*CSEL* 25,808 ff.). Cf. e.g. *mor.* 1,61 (*CSEL* 90,64).

308 Cf. e.g. *conf.* 6,18 (*CCL* 27,86) where Augustine reports his intention to acquire new codices, most likely including the ecclesiastical accepted (cf. *ibidem*: 'libri ecclesiastici') corpus Paulinum.

309 See e.g. H.-Ch. Puech, 'Saint Paul chez les manichéens d'Asie centrale' (1960) in his *Sur le manichéisme* (n. 64), 153–167.

310 See e.g. J. Geffcken, 'Augustins Tolle-lege-Erlebnis', *ARG* 31 (1934) 1–13, esp. 3–4. Marcus' Greek text reads: '*labe, anágnōthi*'. Geffcken here follows some insightful remarks by H. Grégoire in his Budé edition together with M.A. Kugener, *Marc le Diacre, Vie de Porphyre, évêque de Gaza*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres 1930, but also lists a whole series of—in my view—still valid objections.

311 See e.g. Y. Yoshida, *Three Manichaean Sogdian Letters unearthed in Bāzāklik, Turfan, Kyoto*: Ryukoku University 2019. On pp. 163 ff. he translated passages from the Bezeklik letter B. It reads among other things: 'In the beginning, I (your) slave Mānī Wahman, the bishop, offer the service of the fast month: He *chanted* and *carolled* the four hymn-(cycle)s, *recited* twenty teachings and three hundred (short) hymns, and *read* the (holy) book of the sweet Shābuhragān'; '(Your) slave Shād Farrox, the šāxān(?), the son of the Bêma, *chanted* and *carolled* the ten (longer) hymns, *recited* the sixty teachings and three hundred (short) hymns. He *read* the book of the Living Record of the Gospel.'

3.9.4 The *puer an puella* Again

My second remark comprises a further comment on Augustine's '*quasi puer an puella*'. In the past it has even been noted (with reference to all places in the *Confessiones* where '*quasi*' appears) that this adverb actually indicates that it was *not* the voice of a boy or a girl!³¹² I do not want to follow this 'solution' and prefer to read '*quasi*' as meaning here: 'just as', 'as of', also taking into account Augustine's '*nescio*'-addition: 'I do not know which'. The real and important place the boy or girl occupy in Manichaean imagination has been discussed above. The essential place of song in Manichaean (especially liturgical) texts has repeatedly been discussed as well. On the Central Asian images of the Bêma Festival and other religious gatherings I have dealt with, however, a singing child seems to be missing. Yet, making music and singing are depicted on several miniatures³¹³ and, curiously, unidentified children appear in the margins of MIK III 4974 recto which depicts either an 'Alms Service Scene'³¹⁴ or a 'Penitential Scene'.³¹⁵ These children (boys? girls?) also make music and, in all likelihood, they are singing.³¹⁶ We may perceive here some additional evidence of Augustine's speaking of *puer an puella*.

3.9.5 Rom. 13

My third comment relates to Augustine's reading of Rom. 13:13–14. The question of whether Augustine was engaged in a *lectio continua* of his Pauline codex (in all Latin Bibles the corpus Paulinum began with the Epistle to the Romans) and had reached the page on which Rom. 13:13–14, or whether he had arbitrarily opened the codex as some *sortes*-book and his eye fell on the said text, I will not detail now. Courcelle made much of the latter view (and the role of—always male!—*pueri* in it); I rather presume it was indeed a *lectio continua* in which Augustine had arrived at the section in which this text occurs. Subsequently he had taken the codex (with 'a *digitus* or some other sign'³¹⁷ in it indicating

312 R. Joly, 'La scène du jardin de Milan', *La Nouvelle Clío* 7–9 (1955–1957) 443–464.

313 See e.g. MIK 6368 verso in e.g. Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art*, 93–95.

314 See e.g. MIK 4974 in e.g. Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art*, 83–84; cf. e.g. *eadem*, 'An Experiment in Digital Reconstruction with a Manichaean Book Painting', in J. BeDuhn (ed.), *New Light on Manichaeism*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2009, 145–168.

315 So Klimkeit, *Manichaean Art and Calligraphy* [n. 62], 39, who (with reference to Arnold-Döben, *Bildersprache*, [n. 194]) also remarks: 'The boy musician is often a Manichaean symbol and represents the living soul waiting for the saviour envoy'.

316 Cf. also Le Coq, *Miniaturen* [n. 62], 46. Although these children have been dubbed 'putti', they are not just marginal border decorations, but constitute an integrated and supplementing part of the miniature.

317 Cf. *conf.* 8,30 (CCL 27,131): 'Tum interiecto aut digito aut nescio quo alio signo codicem clausi ...'.

the place where he had arrived) into the garden and to that section (litt. *capitulum*)³¹⁸ opened it again. A *lectio continua* may also explain why Augustine in *conf.* 8,21–25 seemingly unexpectedly comes to a 'digression' about the struggle between flesh and spirit: it was not only a Pauline subject dear to the Manichaeans,³¹⁹ but also especially inspired by Rom. 7 just read from his codex. In *conf.* 8,30 we also see that the '*digitus* or some other sign' had a function in the *lectio continua*: Augustine once again opened the codex, showed Alypius what he had just read, after which Alypius continued by reading Rom. 14:1—words, so Augustine characteristically adds, until then unknown to him.³²⁰

3.10 *Augustine's Conversion 4 (conf. 8,30): 'mater' Monnica and the Manichaean Maiden*

In the study of the *Confessiones* it has often been noted that Augustine's depicts Monnica as an image of the Church.³²¹ This allegorical (or typological) interpretation fits very well with the scene in *conf.* 8,30 in which Augustine and Alypius announce their decision to radical asceticism to Monnica. For Catholic Christian readers, Monnica here appears as an image of *mater ecclesia*.

How would Manichaean readers have understood the passage? And does their understanding add some new dimension to our reading?

In Manichaean thinking, the figure of the mother is especially embodied in the Light Form or Maiden of Light. Based on the most relevant Manichaean proof texts, I described her name and various functions in my discussion of Lady Continence. The Maiden of Light (or Life) turns out to be a rather complicated figure; however, it is fully evident that, like almost all figures in the Manichaean myth, she has a *redeeming* function. As we have seen, she plays an essential role in Manichaean eschatology.³²²

But the Maiden is also actively working in the believer's present life and perhaps nowhere is this stated more clearly than in the Coptic *Kephalaia*. Above I already quoted a passage from the seventh chapter of those *Kephalaia* which

318 On the term 'capitulum', see e.g. P. Petitmengin, '*Capitula* païens et chrétiens', in J.-C. Freddouille a.o. (eds.), *Titres et articulations du texte dans les oeuvres antiques*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1997, 491–507.

319 See e.g. Klimkeit, 'Die manichäische Lehre vom alten und neuen Menschen' (n. 175).

320 *Conf.* 8,30 (CCL 27,132): 'Petit uidere quid legissem: ostendi, et attendit etiam ultra quam ego legeram. Et ignorabam quid sequeretur'.

321 See e.g. Th. Fuhrer, 'Allegorical Reading and Writing in Augustine's *Confessiones*', in J.A. van den Berg a.o. (eds.), '*In Search of Truth: Augustine, Manichaeism and other Gnosticism. Studies for Johannes van Oort at Sixty*', Leiden-Boston: Brill 2011 (repr. 2017), 25–45, esp. 41–42.

322 See above, pp. 152–155.

states that 'The third power *after the pattern of Jesus* is the Light Form; the one whom the elect and the catechumens shall receive, should they renounce the world'.³²³ Here I also refer to *Kephalaion* 114 which shows that, 'essentially, the Virgin is the manifestation of the soul in all her chastity and power'.³²⁴

From the perspective of the Manichaean reader, mother Monnica in her function and performance in the conversion story is just like Lady Continence (who is also referred to by Augustine as *mater*)³²⁵ an image of the Manichaean Maiden. The Maiden who is often termed 'Mother' in the Manichaean texts.³²⁶ Besides, for Manichaean readers it will probably be no coincidence that Augustine emphatically speaks about Monnica's *joy*,³²⁷ as it is emphasized in Manichaean texts that the Maiden is Jesus' *joyous* image.³²⁸ And most importantly: it stands to reason that, according to Manichaean interpretation, Monnica is in her essence—like the boy or girl and the voice—represents the heavenly Jesus.

Monnica is also a symbol of the continence to be pursued. According to her son, she was never married to anyone before and after her married life with Patricius.³²⁹ In other words, she was chaste since many years, a Continent (*enkratés*) according to Manichaean thinking,³³⁰ such as now finally Augustine himself. Now that the mournful bonds of the flesh have been loosened, for both Augustine and Monnica the time of joy has come. A Manichaean could have found the new condition worded in one of the *Psalms to Jesus*:

Thou hast been released from the grievous bonds of the flesh (*sárx*);
 thou hast been garlanded in justification over all thy enemies.
The joyous Image (*eikōn*) of Christ—thou shalt have thy fill of it now:
 go thy way therefore victoriously to thy city (*pólis*) of Light.

323 See above, p. 154 and n. 168.

324 Cf. Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 275.

325 *Conf.* 8,27 (*CCL* 27, 130): '... fecunda **mater** filiorum ...'.

326 Cf. e.g. above p. 152 and p. 155 n. 170 the quote from *Psalm to Jesus* 267 and from one of the unnumbered *Psalmoi Sarakōtōn*. See also Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 228, a piece termed 'Dulcises et amoenus: Thou art sweet ...', where it runs in line 9 in likely reference to the Maiden: 'Thou didst obey the **Mother** ...'.

327 *Conf.* 8,30 (*CCL* 27,132): 'Inde ad matrem ingredimur, indicamus: *gaudet*. Narramus, quemadmodum gestum sit: *exultat et triumphat* (...) et convertisti luctum eius in *gaudium* ...'.

328 Cf. the quote from *Psalm to Jesus* 267 above, p. 152.

329 E.g. *conf.* 9,37 (*CCL* 27,154): 'Sit ergo in pace cum uiro, ante quem nulli *et post quem nulli nupta est* ...'.

330 Cf. above, p. 151.

Thou art **glad** because thou hast mixed with the holy angels: upon thee
 is
 15 set the seal (*sphragis*) of thy **glorious** purity.
 Thou art **joyful** because thou hast seen thy divine brethren with whom
 thou
 shalt dwell in the Light for ever.³³¹

4 Final Remarks

After our long quest, a few closing remarks may be in order. As we saw at the beginning of this article, numerous studies have emphasized the Neoplatonic element in Augustine's conversion. This element is extant indeed, but it is conspicuously missing from the actual *narratio* of the event. This *narratio* (conf. 8,13–30) is preceded by descriptions of a new development of Augustine's concept of God in which Platonic insights play an essential role;³³² it is followed, among other things, by a description of an experience of God in which clear reminiscences of (in particular) Plotinus' *Enneads* are present.³³³ All this is, however, almost completely absent from the *narratio*.³³⁴

Did Augustine consciously interweave the story of his conversion with Manichaean elements? And even built it on such elements?

We have seen in section I that he was certainly aware of Manichaean readers.³³⁵ Based on my subsequent analysis in section II, I venture to go a step further and argue that he consciously modelled essential parts of his conversion story after Manichaean examples. Manichaean and ex-Manichaean persons will have understood that dimension first. But also contemporary 'ordinary' readers in the Latin world (Catholics and others) will have understood much more of this than readers from later centuries. The many writings in

331 *Psalm to Jesus* 244; Allberry, *Psalm-Book*, 64,10–17.

332 See e.g. conf. 7,1–2 (CCL 27,92–93). More on this essential aspect in ch. 6.

333 See e.g. conf. 9,24–25 (CCL 27,147–148). Cf. e.g. Henry, *La Vision d'Ostie*, 22, who cautions e.g. on p. 26: '... on peut être sûr, d'avoir retrouvé, dans ces deux célèbres essais (sc. *On Beauty* and *On the three primary hypostases*), les sources, mais littéraires seulement, de la vision d'Ostie'.

334 A possible reminiscence of Plotinus *Enn.* 1,6,8,21 (cf. e.g. Henry, *Plotin*, 107) in conf. 8,19 is no more than a literary echo (cf. e.g. conf. 1,28) and the same goes for a possible Plotinian parallel in conf. 8,18 (cf. e.g. Courcelle, *Recherches*, 191 and 126). In my opinion, all this does not warrant an interpretation such as expressed by Courcelle, 'Les "voix"', 308–310; cf. above, n. 253.

335 Cf. e.g. conf. 8,22 (quoted above, nn. 27 and 30) and conf. 9,9 (quoted above, n. 31).

which Augustine discusses the Manichaeans, their church and customs (not least those works which are more or less contemporary with the *Confessions* such as *c. Faustum* and also the earlier written *De moribus Manichaeorum*), demonstrate how much his contemporaries are informed about the Manichaeans and their thinking. They could certainly also have become familiar with their ideas by other Latin sources such as the *Fragmenta Tebestina* and the widely diffused *Epistula fundamenti* of Mani himself. For the fact that several Manichaean works in Latin existed, reference can certainly also be made to a salient comment by Augustine about Bishop Faustus' reading in *conf.* 5,11.³³⁶

The analyses given above may have shown above all that the experiences gained during the Manichaean Bêma Festival and during the various other moments of confession played a decisive role in the modelling and sometimes even in the precise wording of Augustine's conversion *narratio*. These experiences will have provided important building elements for his own story. Below I briefly summarize a number of conclusions to which a new reading of Augustine's conversion story apparently leads us.

5 Conclusions

- (1) In the *narratio* of Augustine's conversion, the Manichaeans are not only explicitly mentioned, but they are also often implicitly present;
- (2) the extended *confessio* during the Manichaean Bêma Festival made such an impression on Augustine that central elements of it (alongside other moments of confession during his time as a Manichaean *auditor*) can be identified in his conversion story;
- (3) the role of Ponticianus in Augustine's conversion seems to parallel the role of the Manichaean *xweštr/xwēštar*, a person leading *auditores* to confession;
- (4) Augustine's speaking of his '*morbis concupiscentiae*' strongly reminds one of the Manichaean Āz;
- (5) also various other elements of Augustine's very pervasive sense of sin in his *narratio* are especially reminiscent of Manichaean examples;
- (6) the figure of Lady Continence in Augustine's conversion story bears the traits of the Manichaean Maiden, who in turn is a representative of the Manichaean Jesus;

336 *Conf.* 5,11 (CCL 27,62): '... legerat ... suae sectae si qua uolumina latine atque composite conscripta erant'.

- (7) in all probability the explicit mention of a *figus* as well as the emphasis on Augustine's tears had much extra meaning for Manichaeans readers of his *narratio*;
- (8) the sudden voice which calls '*tolle lege*' is reminiscent of the Manichaean principle of the Call and Answer as well as of a likely moment in the celebration of the Bêma Feast in which the reading from a (confessional) codex played a role;
- (9) the singing child (*puer an puella*) in Augustine's conversion story is, according to Manichaean thinking, a representative of Jesus;
- (10) by virtue of her function and performance in the conversion story, the same seems to go for *mater Monnica*.

God, Memory, and Beauty (*conf.* 10,1–38)

1 Introduction

*In the preceding chapters, the focus was on Books 1–9. General remarks have been made on Books 11–13. Book 10 of the *Confessions*, however, being the longest one of the whole work (and to a certain extent still its compositional riddle),¹ has been passed over in nearly complete silence.

I will not enter the issue of Augustine's compositional technique, but only (and 'simply') remark that Books 1–9 focus on Augustine's past and 11–13 deal with the creation account of Genesis 1. Between these two distinct parts we find Book 10 as the long discourse on Augustine's present dispositions.²

2 Book 10 and Its Division

In book 10 the following sections can be distinguished. Its first paragraphs provide an extensive introduction (10,1–7); after that Augustine commences his self-analysis (10,8–11), which is followed by his discussion of memory (10,12–28). Augustine subsequently deals with the quest for the happy life and for God (10,29–40), discusses the temptations of human life (10,41–64), and concludes the book by reflecting on his inquiry (10,65–66). His final meditation is on man's reconciliation with God (10,67–70).

* Earlier version in J. van Oort (ed.), *Augustine and Manichaean Christianity. Selected Papers from the First South African Conference on Augustine of Hippo, University of Pretoria, 24–26 April 2012*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2013, 155–175, revised and updated with a new Postscript in: J. van Oort, *Mani and Augustine. Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine (NHMS 97)*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2020, 284–306. Here slightly updated and amended to fit the argument of this volume.

1 The question of the literary unity of *conf.* is a topic since, in particular, the ground-breaking study of E. Williger, 'Der Aufbau der Konfessiones Augustins', *ZNW* 28 (1929) 325–332, who opined that Augustine first wrote Books 1–9 and 11–13 and later added Book 10. He was supported by, for instance, Courcelle (*Recherches* [below, n. 4], 25), but disputed by, among others, G.N. Knauer, *Psalmenzitate in Augustins Konfessionen*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1955. Presently I do not know of any serious Augustine researcher still defending the position of Williger and others.

2 Cf. *BA* 14, 141: 'Les dispositions actuelles d'Augustin'.

2.1 *The Opening Passage (conf. 10,1)*

As a rule Augustine follows classical practice in indicating the theme of a work or book at its beginning. Looking for clues to find the central theme of Book 10, we may explore its first paragraph:

Cognoscam te, cognitor meus, cognoscam, sicut et cognitus sum. Virtus animae meae, intra in eam et coapta tibi, ut habeas et possideas sine macula et ruga. Haec est mea spes, ideo loquor et in ea spe gaudeo, quando sanum gaudeo. Cetera uero uitae huius tanto minus flenda, quanto magis fletur, et tanto magis flenda, quanto minus fletur in eis. Ecce enim ueritatem dilexisti, quoniam qui facit eam, uenit ad lucem. Volo eam facere in corde meo coram te in confessione, in stilo autem meo coram multis testibus.

CCL 27,155

In translation:

May I know You who knows me. May I 'know as I also am known' (1Cor. 13:12). Strength of my soul, enter it and prepare it for Yourself, so that You may have and hold it 'without spot or wrinkle' (Eph. 5:27). This is my hope; therefore I speak (cf. Ps. 115:1), and in this hope do I rejoice when I rejoice healthfully (*sanum*). But the other things of this life are the less to be wept for, the more they are wept for; and the more to be wept for, the less they are wept for. 'See, You have loved the truth' (Ps. 50:8), for 'he who does' it 'comes to the light' (John 3:21). This I desire to do, in my heart before You in confession, and in my writing 'before many witnesses' (1Tim. 6:12).

At first glance these sentences are nothing unusual in the context of the work. Augustine confesses that all his hope and joy is in God. Moreover, as is typical for this writing, he intersperses his words with biblical ones from Paul and the Psalms in particular.

A closer look at the opening passage may provide some clues as regard the specific audience addressed. Previous research indicated the intended audience of the *Confessions* as being by no means one-dimensional. Apart from the traditional *serui dei*, the spiritually advanced 'servants of God', being the peers of Augustine the bishop and writer,³ a broad spectrum of possible readers has been indicated: people to be converted to (Catholic) Christianity; recently converted Catholics; Catholic Christians under pressure of Manichaean pros-

³ Cf. *conf.* 10,6.

elytizing; Manichaeans of diverse rank and conviction.⁴ An important marker may be the fact that in the immediately preceding Book 9 the Manichaeans are addressed directly⁵ and, moreover, Books 11–13 offer a Genesis exegesis closely connected with Manichaean issues. Something Manichaean might be expected in Book 10 as well.

A first clue emerges from Augustine's reference to knowledge in the opening sentence. Manichaeism is a form of Gnosticism and claims to supply saving knowledge.⁶ This knowledge (Greek *gnōsis*, Coptic *saune*) is often specified as 'the knowledge of truth'⁷ or, for instance, 'the knowledge of thy (sc. Jesus' or Mani's) hope (*elpís*)'.⁸ In a Manichaean text it is stated that 'the Youth' (a manifestation of the redeeming Christ figure)⁹ reveals itself and that its knowledge and truth and wisdom illumine the soul.¹⁰ Augustine's speaking of knowledge through recourse to a quote from a well-known Pauline letter¹¹ appears to be indicative. It may be valued as the first indication of the book's subject matter.

Augustine continues by saying: 'Power of my soul, enter into it and prepare it for Yourself, so that You may have and hold it without spot or wrinkle'. 'Without spot or wrinkle' is reminiscent of Eph. 5:27 and, moreover, calls to mind the image of a bride. In the Manichaean *Psalm-Book* both the Church (*ekklēsia*) and the soul (*psyché*) are called 'bride'.¹² Manichaeism was also a form of Christian mysticism.¹³ Here we see that Augustine's words strongly parallel Manichaean mystical concepts. This observation is further validated by the reference to

4 See e.g. A. Kotzé, 'The "Anti-Manichaean" Passage in *Confessions* 3 and its "Manichaean Audience"', VC 62 (2008) 187–200 (188). For the Roman Manichaean Secundinus' reading of (parts of) the *conf.*, see my 'Secundini Manichaei Epistula' (2001) (= ch. 20 in *Mani and Augustine. Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2020, repr. 2023). Cf. P. Courcelle, *Recherches sur les Confessions de saint Augustin*, Paris: É. de Boccard 1968, 236–238.

5 *Conf.* 9,9; cf. 8,22.

6 See e.g. Mani's Gospel as quoted in the *Cologne Mani Codex* (= *CMC*) p. 68 ff.

7 C.R.C. Allberry (ed. and transl.), *A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, Part II (Manichaean Manuscripts in the Chester Beatty Collection, Vol. II), Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer 1938, p. 6, l. 23.

8 *Manichaean Psalm-Book* 85,25.

9 In Manichaeism, Christ is the central redeeming figure or principle specified by different names. More on this Youth in ch. 7.

10 *Psalm-Book* 105,27–28: 'thy knowledge / and thy Truth and thy Wisdom illumine the soul'.

11 I.e., also well known to the Manichaeans. See e.g. *Psalm-Book* 121,9. Cf. Alexander Böhlig, *Die Bibel bei den Manichäern und verwandte Studien*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2012, 198–199 and *passim*.

12 E.g. *Psalm-Book* 159,1 and 3: 'The Bride is the Church (*ekklēsia*), the Bridegroom is [...]. / The Bride is the soul (*psyché*), the Bridegroom is Jesus'.

13 See below n. 21 for an indication of Manichaean mysticism. I still think that the most important *impetus* of Augustine's own mysticism came from his Manichaean past; cf. 'Augustin und der Manichäismus', *ZRGG* 46 (1994) 126–142, esp. 142.

Christ as *uirtus*, power.¹⁴ According to Manichaeism doctrine, with reference to 1 Cor. 1:24, Christ is the wisdom and power of God.¹⁵

The next sentence is remarkable as well: 'This is my hope; therefore I speak (cf. Ps. 115:1 Vulg.), and in this hope do I rejoice when I rejoice *sanum*, healthfully'. The adverb *sanum* has attracted attention previously.¹⁶ The peculiar word seems to be used on purpose. Why? In the *Confessions*, as in Augustine's other writings, the Manichaeans are the *insani*, the mad ones.¹⁷ Labelling them this way was common practice. Mani, in Greek *Mánēs*, was nicknamed *Maneís*, the aorist participle passive of the verb *maínomai*, to be mad.¹⁸ It will not be by chance that Augustine stresses his '*sanum gaudium*'. Such a joy is not the Manichaeans' joy in their madness! Another pointer to a Manichaean context seems to be Augustine's differentiating manner of speaking. 'This is *my hope*; therefore I speak, and in *this hope*, I rejoice'. Christ who is asked to enter his heart is Augustine's hope, which is expressed in deliberate contrast to the Manichaeans' speaking of their religion as 'the (true) *hope*' (*elpís*).¹⁹

The next sentence is rather obscure. Already its translation causes difficulties. Perhaps it may run: 'The other things of this life are the less to be wept for, the more they are wept for; and the more to be wept for, the less they are wept for'.²⁰ Does Augustine (also?) hint at his weeping for Monnica in Book 9? But what meaning would this convey in the context? Or is he 'simply' saying here that, apart from the knowledge of God, all other things of life should be deemed null and void? The words are uttered in the context of a quote from

14 Cf. *conf.* 11,11: 'In hoc principio, deus, fecisti caelum et terram in uerbo tuo, in filio tuo, in uirtute tua, in sapientia tua ...'.

15 See Faustus in *c. Faust.* 20,2.

16 *The Confessions of Augustine*. Edited by John Gibb (...) and William Montgomery (...). Cambridge: University Press 1927, 272: 'The adverb [sc. *sanum*] is noted as an 'addendum lexicis latinis' in Archiv für Lat. Lexicog. 1898, p. 52'.

17 E.g. *conf.* 9,8; 13,45; *c. Faust.* 12,6.

18 See e.g. Titus of Bostra, *Adv. Man.* (Gr.) 1,10 (ed. P. de Lagarde 5,29); Epiphanius, *Pan.* 66,1 ff. (ed. K. Holl [- J. Dummer], *GCS* 37,14 ff.). Cf. e.g. Eusebius, *HE* 7,31 (ed. E. Schwartz, *GCS* 9,2,716).

19 Such was already the case with Mani. According to the *CMC*, his own Gospel is 'the Gospel of his most holy hope (*elpís*)' (*CMC* p. 66); he said in this Gospel that he 'proclaimed hope (*elpís*)' (*CMC* 67), and (in all probability also in the Gospel section) it is stated that Mani's Sýzygos brought to him 'the noblest hope (*elpís*)' (*CMC* 69). In Coptic Manichaica such as the *Psalm-Book* and the *Kephalaia*, passages on Mani and Manichaeism as 'the (holy) hope (*elpís*)' abound.

20 Henry Chadwick, in his rightly acclaimed *Saint Augustine, Confessions. Translated with an Introduction and Notes*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1991, 179, renders: 'As to the other pleasures of life, regret at their loss should be in inverse proportion to the extent to which one weeps for losing them. The less we weep for them, the more we ought to be weeping'. But this rendering seems to make the passage no less enigmatic.

Ps. 50 (Vulg.), the well-known *miserere*. The very same Psalm is quoted in the refrain of one of the typically mystic 'Psalms of the Wanderers' in the Manichaean *Psalm-Book*.²¹ It may be noted as well that weeping is an essential element in Mani's religion.²² In the *Psalm-Book* the name of one of Mani's own (semi-)canonical writings is handed down as 'The Weeping'.²³ From other passages in the *Psalm-Book* we may infer that this writing was often recited²⁴ and in one of the Psalms of the Bema it is stated: 'Blessed are thy (i.e. Mani's) loved ones that shed their tears for thee'.²⁵ Is Augustine polemicizing here against a well-known Manichaean habit and does he assess it as being opposed to true Christian life style?

The text continues with "See, You have loved the truth" (Ps. 50:8), for "he who does" it "comes to the light" (John 3:21). The word truth (*ueritas*) is highly significant here, because Mani, in his Gospel, already proclaimed himself to be 'I, Mani, apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, the Father of truth' (*alétheia*),²⁶ and in his letter to Edessa he states that he speaks 'the truth' (*alétheia*) and the secrets'.²⁷ From the *Cologne Mani Codex*,²⁸ from many other Manichaean writings,²⁹ and not least from Augustine's own testimony in *conf.* 3,10,³⁰ we know that the Manichaeans constantly emphasized their proclamation of 'the truth'. Likely in opposition to this claim, Augustine here confesses his new (Catholic) Christian love for the truth and its implementation. In this way, he 'comes to the light'. This turn of phrase seems to be an evident (anti-theoretical) allusion to the religion preached by Mani, 'the Apostle of Light'.³¹

The last sentence of the opening passage restates Augustine's intention to do the truth (a) in confession in his heart *coram Deo*, and (b) in his writing before many witnesses. Truth (*ueritatem, eam, eam*) and knowledge (*cognoscam, cog-*

21 *Psalm-Book* 159,21 ff.: 'Put in me a holy heart, my God: let an upright / Spirit be new within me. / The holy heart is Christ: if he rises in us, / we also shall rise in him. / Christ has risen, the dead shall rise with him. If we believe / in him, we shall pass beyond death and come to life.' Etc.

22 On this phenomenon, see ch. 3.

23 *Psalm-Book* 47,1.

24 *Psalm-Book* 162,23–24: 'O Father, o Mind of Light, come and wear me until I have recited the woe [i.e., the Weeping] of the Son of Man'. We find the same in *Psalm-Book* 178,1–2.

25 *Psalm-Book* 44,27–28.

26 *CMC* 66.

27 *CMC* 64.

28 See also *CMC* 16; 29; 41; etc.

29 E.g. *Psalm-Book* 3,12.20; 6,5.23; 9,5.9 etc.; [H.J. Polotsky & A. Böhlig, ed. and transl.], *Kephalaia*, Band 1, 1. Hälfte (Lieferung 1–10), Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag 1940, p. 5,31.32; etc.

30 *Conf.* 3,10: 'et dicebant: ueritas et ueritas, et multum eam dicebant mihi ...'.

31 For Mani as the Apostle of Light, see e.g. *Psalm-Book* 139,48. Although, as far as I am aware,

nitor, *cognoscam*, *cognitus*) are keywords in the passage, and both concepts are clearly reminiscent of the story of Augustine's first acquaintance with Manichaeism in *conf.* 3,10.³² In Manichaeism truth and knowledge are closely related, for the Elect acquire knowledge of the eternal truth. It seems quite likely that Augustine, where he starts a new section of his writing,³³ uses these words with a specific purpose in mind. They are pointers to direct the reader's mind towards the writer's intention. Augustine is a converted person, known by God (*sicut ego et cognitus sum*), and after his conversion comes the transformation of the inner self.³⁴ The essence of this transformation is indicated as 'coming to the light' and, in the following chapters of Book 10, initiated by self-analysis. As seems to be the case in this programmatic introductory paragraph, the terms used in the analysis of the inner self may involve elements of his Manichaean past.

2.2 *Beginning the Search for God in Memory (conf. 10,7ff.)*

Explicit terms that might recall Manichaean matters are sparse in the immediately following paragraphs. Although words like abyss (*abyssus*, 10,2), hidden (*occultus*, 10,2) or groaning (*gemitus*, 10,2) are well known from Manichaean texts,³⁵ there seems to be no reason for ascribing a Manichaean meaning to them. The same may go for Christ addressed as 'physician of my most intimate self' (*medice meus intime*, 10,3), although the designation of Christ as physician is typical of both Augustine³⁶ and the Manichaeans.³⁷ But the immediate con-

only in later tradition Manichaeism is called 'the Religion of Light', 'coming to the light' seems to have been a term for joining Mani's church much earlier, while the opposite position of 'leaving the light' is described as 'the passage of light' through someone. See *util. cred.* 3 on the Manichaeans' speaking of an apostate: 'lumen per illum transitum fecit'.

32 Cf. the analysis in 'Augustine's Criticism of Manichaeism: The Case of *Confessions* III,6,10 and Its Implications', in: Pieter W. van der Horst (ed.), *Aspects of Religious Contact and Conflict in the Ancient World* (Utrechtse Theologische Reeks), Utrecht: Faculty of Theology, University of Utrecht 1995, 57–68 [revised version in *Mani and Augustine*, ch. 16].

33 After he concluded Books 1–9, in which so many sections are specifically aimed at a Manichaean audience; or even after completing Books 1–9 and 11–13 in which the Manichaean views are a specific target of polemic.

34 Perhaps one may say, in theological terms, that the *iustificatio* is followed by the *sanctificatio*.

35 See e.g. *Psalm-Book* 2,4.11.15; 3,24; 10,9 etc. for abyss; *idem* 1,4; 7,16; 12,13 etc. for hidden; *idem* 142,19; 209,13–14 for groaning.

36 See e.g. R. Arbesmann, 'Christ the *medicus humilis* in St. Augustine', *AM* 2, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1954, 623–629; *idem*, 'The Concept of *Christus medicus* in St. Augustine', *Traditio* 10 (1954) 1–28; P.C.J. Eijkenboom, *Het Christus-Medicusmotief in de preken van Sint Augustinus*, Assen: Van Gorcum 1960.

37 See e.g. V. Arnold-Döben, *Die Bildersprache des Manichäismus*, Köln: In Kommission bei E.J. Brill 1978, 98 ff.; A. Böhlig, *Die Gnosis*, III, *Der Manichäismus*, Zürich & München:

text does not provide an indication to label the expression as 'Manichaeian'.³⁸ There is, however, an evident hint at his former coreligionists when Augustine, in his long prayer, says to God 'that You cannot be in any way subjected to violence' (10,7).³⁹ We often find this notion in the *Confessions*, as part of Augustine's standard repertoire of anti-Manichaeian polemics.⁴⁰

The following sections deserve specific attention. After having stated in 10,7 that he, a human person, does not fully know himself, Augustine continues in 10,8 by first expounding that the love of God, whose nature is superior to all things, is acquired by the knowledge of the senses. The text of 10,8 runs:

Non dubia, sed certa conscientia, domine, amo te. Percussisti cor meum uerbo tuo, et amaui te. Sed et caelum et terra et omnia, quae in eis sunt, ecce undique mihi dicunt, ut te amem, nec cessant dicere omnibus, ut sint inexcusabiles. Altius autem tu misereberis, cui misertus eris, et misericordiam praestabis, cui misericors fueris: alioquin caelum et terra surdis loquuntur laudes tuas. Quid autem amo, cum te amo? Non speciem corporis nec decus temporis, non candorem lucis ecce istum amicum oculis, non dulces melodias cantilenarum omnimodarum, non florum et ungentorum et aromatum suauiolentiam, non manna et mella, non membra acceptabilia carnis amplexibus: non haec amo, cum amo deum meum. Et tamen amo quandam lucem et quandam uocem et quandam odorem et quandam cibum et quandam amplexum, cum amo deum meum, lucem, uocem, odorem, cibum, amplexum interioris hominis mei, ubi fulget animae meae, quod non capit locus, et ubi sonat, quod non rapit tempus, et ubi olet, quod non spargit flatus, et ubi sapit, quod non minuit edacitas, et ubi haeret, quod non diuellit satietas. Hoc est quod amo, cum deum meum amo.

CCL 27, 158–159

Artemis Verlag 1980, 247, 249, 255 ff. For Mani himself as physician, see e.g. L.J.R. Ort, *Mani: A religio-historical Description of his Personality*, Leiden: E.J. Brill 1967, 95–101; W.B. Oerter, 'Mani als Arzt? Zur Deutung eines manichäischen Bildes', in: V. Vavřínek (ed.), *From Late Antiquity to Early Byzantium*, Praha: Academia 1985, 219–223 (220–221).

38 Cf. *conf.* 10,39: 'medicus es, aeger sum'. A Manichaeian context, however, may be assumed for *conf.* 2,15 ('... non me derideat ab eo medico aegrum sanari ...'), as perhaps also for 4,5 ('... sed non ut medicus. Nam illius morbi tu sanator, qui resistis superbis, humilibus autem das gratiam').

39 *Conf.* 10,7: '... te noui nullo modo posse uiolari'.

40 E.g. *conf.* 7,3; cf. *conf.* 7,6 and many other passages in which God's 'harmlessness' (*innocens*) and 'incorruptness' (*incompactus*) is stressed.

In a quite literal translation:

Not with uncertain, but with sure consciousness do I love You, Lord. You pierced my heart with Your word, and I loved You. But also the heaven and earth and everything in them, see, on all sides they tell me to love You. Nor do they cease to speak to all, 'so that they are without excuse' (Rom. 1:20). But more deeply You will have mercy on whom You will have mercy and will show pity on whom You will have pity (Rom. 9:15). Otherwise heaven and earth do utter Your praises to deaf ears. But what do I love when I love You? Not corporeal beauty, nor temporal splendour, nor the brightness of the light which, see, is so pleasant to these (earthly) eyes, nor the sweet melodies of all kinds of songs, nor the fragrant smell of flowers, and ointments, and herbs, nor manna and honey, nor limbs acceptable to the embraces of the flesh. It is not these I love when I love my God. And yet I love some sort of light, and sound, and fragrance, and food, and embracement when I love my God—the light, sound, fragrance, food, and embracement of my inner self (litt. 'inner man/human', cf. Eph. 3:16). It is there that shines unto my soul what space cannot contain, it is there that sounds what time snatches not away, it is there that smells what no breeze disperses, it is there that is tasted what no eating diminishes, and it is there that clings what no satiety can part. This is what I love when I love my God.

One may say that the famous dictum 'You have struck (or 'pierced', *percussisti*) my heart with Your word and I loved You' is reminiscent of the well-known Manichaean concept of Call and Answer (or Hearing). In Manichaeism the human soul is considered to answer to the call from the heavenly world and, in this way, one becomes a gnostic. In many Manichaean texts Call and Answer (*Ptōhme* and *Psōtme*) are even hypostasized as heavenly entities.⁴¹ Moreover, in the Manichaean *Psalm-Book* it is said that 'Jesus is ... in the heart of his Faithful (*pistós*)'⁴² and that 'the word of God' (i.e., Jesus) 'dwells (...) in the heart of the Continent (*enkratés*)'.⁴³ Besides, it runs in the *Psalm-Book*: 'Since I knew thee, my Spirit, I have loved thee'.⁴⁴ All this seems to indicate a Manichaean tradition in the background of Augustine's famous dictum; or at least some echo of Manichaean phraseology. It is difficult to believe that Christ is depicted as

41 E.g. *Psalm-Book* 133,29; 138,7–8.17–18; 139,28; 199,9; *Keph.* 43,3; 182,1ff.

42 *Psalm-Book* 161,7–8.

43 *Psalm-Book* 151,15–19.

44 *Psalm-Book* 169,21.

some sort of heavenly Cupid,⁴⁵ and that Augustine's formulation here is meant only to express the same sense as *conf.* 9,3: 'You pierced (*sagittaueras*) our heart with the arrow of Your love'.⁴⁶ The last-mentioned dictum became the source of the well-known emblem of Augustine, a flaming heart pierced by an arrow.

The terms used to describe the object of Augustine's love, however, are much more conspicuous in our context: 'But what do I love, when I love You? Not corporeal beauty, nor temporal splendour, nor the brightness of the light which, see, is so pleasant to these (earthly) eyes, nor the sweet melodies of all kinds of songs, nor the fragrant smell of flowers, and ointments, and herbs, nor manna and honey, nor limbs acceptable to the embraces of the flesh. It is not these I love when I love my God'. God is described in terms which are unmistakably reminiscent of Manichaean terms, concepts, and religious practices. It is as if Augustine brings to mind to both himself *and* his readers the sensory experiences of the Manichaean religious services. According to Manichaean belief, God is Light substance, and this Light is dispersed throughout the world, in particular in certain foods. Such foods (fruits like melons, figs, olives, and also cucumbers) are beautiful and splendid and bright because of their light substance.⁴⁷ During the sacred meals of the Manichaean Elect—which meals are rightly termed 'eucharist'⁴⁸—sweet melodies of all kinds of songs resound.⁴⁹ There is evidence that flowers, ointments, and herbs were part of these sacred meals,⁵⁰ and also manna and honey were well known.⁵¹ Furthermore, in Manichaeism not only the godly light substance set free through the sacred meal is adored because of its beauty, splendour, brightness and so on, but God and the

45 Chadwick, *Augustine, Confessions* (n. 20), 156 and 183. Chadwick, *Confessions*, 156 n. 2 states: 'The symbol of Christ as heavenly Eros was familiar from the Latin version of Origen's commentary on the Song of Songs. Augustine's African critic, Arnobius the Younger, could write of "Christ our Cupid". As far as I can see, Chadwick is not followed in this opinion.

46 *Conf.* 9,3: 'Sagittaueras tu corde nostrum caritate tua ...'.

47 See e.g. *mor.* 2,43.

48 Cf. Jason D. BeDuhn, 'Eucharist or Yasna? Antecedents of Manichaean food ritual', in R.E. Emmerick a.o. (eds.), *Studia Manichaica. IV. Internationaler Kongreß zum Manichäismus, Berlin, 14.–18. Juli 1997*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag 2000, 14–36.

49 For music, see for instance a miniature from Kocho, ruin K (MIK III 6368) in Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, *Manichaean Art in Berlin Collections*, Turnhout: Brepols 2001, 92–95, which 'Hymnody Scene' might already depict music in a liturgical setting, i.e., either in an 'Alms Service Scene' or even in a 'Bema Scene'. See further the 'Psalms of the Bema' in Manichaean *Psalm-Book*, 1–47.

50 E.g. *mor.* 2, 39.

51 The (originally Hebrew) word 'manna' occurs in e.g. *Psalm-Book* 136,38 and 139,58. Curiously, it is also mentioned in *CMC* 107 and in *c. Faust.* 19,22. For honey, see e.g. *Psalm-Book* 158,27 and 184,13.

godly world are described in the same terms. The ‘Song of the Lovers’ (*amatorium canticum*) quoted by Augustine in his *Reply to Faustus* communicates that the Manichaean God is conceived as being crowned with flowers (*floreis coronis cinctum*) and surrounded by twelve Aeons (*duodecim saecula*) clothed in flowers (*floribus conuestita*), full of melodious sounds (*canoribus plena*) and throwing their flowers at the Father’s face (*in faciem patris flores suos iactantia*). Besides, the ‘fields’ (*campi*) of the godly world are visualized as ‘abounding with sweet scent and hills and trees and seas and rivers which flow forever with sweet nectar’.⁵² Moreover, in the Manichaean sources the godly Light dispersed throughout the world is identified as ‘the members’ (*membra*) of God which are enclosed in matter,⁵³ which matter is often named ‘the flesh’ (*caro*).⁵⁴

Augustine’s quest for God as the object of his love is, very surprisingly, described in terms which denote that God is *not* to be conceived physically, i.e. not in a physical-material way such as the Manichaeans conceive their God. Thus, still in about 400 when Augustine wrote this part of the *Confessions*, his gnostic past was at the forefront of his mind.

2.3 God and the Five Senses

The passage in which Augustine commences his self-analysis discloses more. The question is: When I love God, what do I love? Augustine’s answer runs: it

52 C. *Faust.* 15,5–6 (CSEL 25, 425–428): ‘annon recordaris amatorium canticum tuum, ubi describis maximum regnantem regem, sceptrigerum perennem, floreis coronis cinctum et facie rutilantem? (...) sequeris enim cantando et adiungis duodecim saecula floribus conuestita et canoribus plena et in faciem patris flores suos iactantia. ubi et ipsos duodecim magnos quosdam deos profiteris, ternos per quattuor tractus, quibus ille unus circumcingitur. (...) inuitauit enim te doctrina daemoniorum mendaciloquorum ad fictas domos angelorum, ubi flat aura salubris, et ad campos ubi scatent aromata, cuius arbores et montes, maria et flumina, dulce nectar fluunt per cuncta saecula. (...) itane tu facie ad faciem uidisti regnantem regem sceptrigerum floreis coronis cinctum ...’ etc.

53 E.g. c. *Faust.* 6,4; 6,8; 8,2; 13,6; 13,18; 15,7 etc. A fine example as well is in *En. in Ps.* 140,12 (CCL 40, 2034–2035): ‘Dei membra uexat, qui terram sulco discindit; Dei membra uexat, qui herbam de terra uellit; Dei membra uexat qui pomum carpit de arbore (...). Membra iniquiunt, illa Dei quae capta sunt in illo praelio, mixta sunt uniuerso mundo et sunt in arboribus, in herbis, in pomis, in fructibus (...). Panem mendicanti non porrigit; quaeris quare? Ne vitam quae est in pane, quam dicunt membrum Dei, substantiam diuinam, mendicus ille accipiat, et liget eam in carne.’ See in the Coptic sources e.g. *Psalm-Book* 127,29–31: ‘... because of the bond which is upon thy [i.e. the Father’s] members (*mélos*)’ and 128, 2: ‘thy members (*mélos*)’.

54 E.g. c. *Faust.* 6,4: ‘... ut ipsa dei membra esse credatis, a carnis carcere dimittantur ...’; 6,6: ‘Cur autem, si carnibus uesci non uultis, non ipsa animalia deo uestro oblata mactatis, ut ipsa dei membra esse credatis, a carnis carcere dimittantur’. Cf. the quote from *En. in Ps.* 140,12 above.

has nothing to do with the five *physical* senses. Up to now researchers have attributed Augustine's speaking of five physical senses to his rhetorical training. Is this correct? Five human senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell have been distinguished in Greek and Roman philosophy from ancient times onwards and, for Augustine's own time, one may indeed speak of 'a rhetorical device'.⁵⁵ But is, for instance, a classical writer such as Cicero here his real source? It should be noted that the concept of five senses was well known in Manichaean circles⁵⁶ and—likely—even to Mani himself.⁵⁷ Manichaean religious practice, rooted in the concept of God as physical Light substance, was finely attuned to the sensory. It seems quite likely that in his talking about God, i.e. in his very *theo-logy*, Augustine is influenced by Manichaean ways of speaking.

This may already be observed in the next sentences. Although Augustine rejects the idea that direct knowledge of God can be attained via the *physical* senses, he retains the scheme of the five senses as a manner to acquire knowledge of God. Instead of the physical senses, he speaks of their spiritual counterparts: God is a certain light, voice, odour, food and embrace sensed *by the inner person*. The scheme of the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch) to know God is retained, but in a non-material way. Both the material and, as its counterpart, the explicitly non-material manner of speaking seem to be inspired by Manichaean thinking. It is aimed at Manichaean readers in particular.

There is another interesting and even essential aspect. As a rule Manichaeism is considered as representing only a material world view, i.e. only believing in physical substances. Interesting passages in the *Kephalaia* demonstrate this view to be one-sided.⁵⁸ First, there is a chapter in the *Kephalaia* in which Mani is said to have spoken of the (internal) intellectual qualities of consideration, counsel, insight, thought and mind through which the soul ascends to the Father and the aeons of glory.⁵⁹ Such a text clearly demonstrates the

55 E.g. J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions*, 111, *Commentary on Books 8–13; Indexes*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992, 167. More on this question below.

56 E.g. *Psalm-Book* 150, 22–26.

57 See the *Letter to Menoch* (which, in all probability, is a genuine letter of Mani) in Augustine's *c. Iul. op. imp.* 3, 175: '... siue per uisum, siue per tactum, siue per auditum, siue per odoratum, siue per gustum ...'.

58 The *Kephalaia* are quoted according to page numbers and lines in Polotsky & Böhlig, *Kephalaia* (n. 29). English translation: Iain Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher. The edited Coptic Manichaean Texts in Translation with Commentary*, Leiden-New York-Köln: E.J. Brill 1995 [repr. Leiden-Boston: Brill 2016].

59 *Keph.* ch. 2, p. 16, 32–23, 13; cf. Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 22–26.

idea of an *internal* and *mental* process of salvation in Manichaeism. Besides, many *Kephalaia* speak of the work of the Light Mind—a Manichaean concept close (and probably even identical) to the general Christian concept of Holy Spirit.⁶⁰ For instance in *Kephalaion* 38⁶¹ it is stated that, according to Mani, this Light Mind (*Nous*) enters the Elect and transforms ‘the old man’ into ‘the new man’⁶² by freeing the five intellectual qualities of mind, thought, insight, counsel, and consideration. In this way the Manichaean Elect is transformed into ‘a new man’, a transformation which purifies his spiritual intellect so that he can ascend *in his heart* to God the Father.⁶³ There seems to be even a text in which God is described as consisting of five great light limbs, each of these limbs being connected with an element (light, perfume, voice, etc.) that can be perceived by one of the five senses.⁶⁴

Evidently, the passage from the *conf.* analysed above has a Manichaean flavour. In the following paragraphs both Manichaean and anti-Manichaean elements may be detected as well.⁶⁵ Augustine continues his argument by stating that even ‘sensing’ God with one’s spiritual faculties does not provide real knowledge of God. One must delve deeper. Is God the life of the body? This idea is rejected as well: God is not this, but the *uitae uita*, the life of life (*conf.* 10,10). Neither is He the mind (*animus*), for also animals have mind and they also perceive through the body.

2.4 *God and Memory: conf. 10,12–13 and Kephalaion 56 Compared*

Augustine continues by asking: May God be found in my memory? I will not follow his full train of thought but look at his terminology in particular. Augustine’s theory of memory has become world famous, and it is not my intention, when looking for the possible sources of his theory, to somehow detract

60 See e.g. *Keph.* p. 143,29,32; 189,30 and 190,2,3,6 where the Light Mind is explicitly called ‘Holy Spirit’.

61 *Keph.* p. 89,18–102,12; cf. Gardner, 93–105.

62 Cf. Paul and Pauline theology in e.g. *Rom* 6–7; *Eph* 4,22–23; cf. 2 *Cor* 4,16; *Col.* 3,9.

63 *Keph.* p. 100,7–10, in Gardner’s translation (Gardner, 103–104): ‘He [i.e. the Light Mind] bestows a great spirit upon the elect one. Indeed, now may You find him, as he stands on the earth, *rising up in his heart and ascending to the Father*, the God of truth’. Cf. for this process of transformation and renovation by the Light *Nous* of the old man into the new man e.g. *Keph.* p. 172,3–4; 215,1–5; etc.

64 *Keph.* 21, p. 64,13–65,13; Gardner, 67–68. Unfortunately the text is rather defective.

65 See e.g. Augustine’s speaking of the ‘fores carnis meae’ in *conf.* 10,9 and the ‘doors’ [of the fleshly body] in *Keph.* 141,15–16 etc. The opinion expressed in *conf.* 10,10 that those who are of sound mind (‘... quibus integer sensus est ...’) hear truth speaking: ‘Your God is not earth or heaven or any physical body’ (‘Veritas dicit enim mihi: “Non est deus tuus terra et caelum neque omne corpus”’) seems to be directed against Manichaean thinking as well.

of this fame. Researchers are still rather vague about the sources of his discussions of memory.⁶⁶ They refer to Platonic and Aristotelian influences in general terms, and also state that Augustine was influenced by eclectic philosophers such as Cicero.⁶⁷ As far as Platonism is concerned, of course, its doctrine of recollection, still prominent in Middle Platonism and Neo-Platonic thinkers such as Plotinus, has been indicated as playing an important part in Augustine's considerations.⁶⁸ With regard to Aristotelian influences, Aristotle's explanation of the nature of the soul and its relationship to mind, and how memory proceeds, is deemed to be important as well.⁶⁹ All this does not imply that Augustine himself read works of Aristotle such as *De anima* (in actual fact we only know of an independent study of Aristotle's *Categories*),⁷⁰ but, like much of the Platonic and, for instance, the Stoic school tradition, the Stagirite's theories seem to have reached him via doxographic works and eclectic thinkers.⁷¹ Detecting more precisely the philosophical traces of influence on Augustine, however, does not turn out to be simple. I believe that one should also refer to Manichaean influence.

Part of the curious Manichaean text *Kephalaion* 56 runs as follows:⁷²

138,20 Once again the enlightener (*phōstér*) [= Mani] speaks: The moulder (*plástēs*) placed in the form (*plásma*) of Adam and Eve limbs (*mélos*),

66 See Gerard J.P. O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, Berkeley-Los Angeles: University of California Press 1987; Roland Teske, 'Augustine's philosophy of memory', in E. Stump & N. Kretzmann (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006, 148–158; James J. O'Donnell, 'Memoria', in *AL* 3, Basel: Schwabe 2004–2010, 1249–1257. The chapter by Matthew R. Lootens, 'Augustine', in: Paul L. Gravilyak & Sarah Coakley (eds.), *The Spiritual Senses. Perceiving God in Western Christianity*, Cambridge: CUP 2011, 56–70, mainly deals with Augustine's theory of the 'spiritual senses', which is indicated (56–57 n. 3) as being influenced by either Origen, Plotinus, or Ambrose, while for 'corporeal' sensation reference is also made to Stoicism (57 n. 5). Mani or Manichaeism, however, do not show up anywhere in the book.

67 See e.g. O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind*, nearly *passim* for general theories of the soul (e.g. 15: 'we cannot exclude the possibility of an Augustinian amalgam of Platonic, Peripatetic and Stoic views, with a strong Ciceronian influence') and esp. 131 n. 5 (with reference to Cicero) for memory. Cf. O'Donnell, 'Memoria', 1250.

68 E.g. O'Daly, *Philosophy*, 199–201; cf. O'Donnell, 'Memoria', 1254.

69 E.g. O'Daly, *Philosophy*, 59f; 145; cf. O'Donnell, 'Memoria', 1254.

70 *Conf.* 4,28.

71 G. Christopher Stead, 'Aristoteles', *AL* 1, Basel: Schwabe 1986–1994, 445–448.

72 In Gardner's translation (slightly emended): Gardner, *Kephalaia*, 146–148. Italics, bold, Greek, and Coptic key terms in round brackets and words in square brackets are mine; ... indicate the *lacunae* in the manuscript. Cf. the original edition in Polotsky & Böhlig, *Kephalaia*, 138–140.

outside and within, for perception (*aísthēsis*) and activity (*enérgeia*). He [i.e. Adam, or the human form] was apportioned house by house (*hī hī*).⁷³ For everything that his perceptions (*aísthētérion*) and elements (*stoicheion*) will receive externally there are internal storehouses (*tamieíon*) and repositories (*apothékē*) and cavities (*spélaion*); and what is received into them is stored in them. Whenever they will be *questioned* about what is deposited in their internal storehouses (*tamieíon*), they bring out what they have received within and give it to the *questioner* (*apaitētēs*) who requested it of them.

138,30 In this way his faculty (*Enthýmēsis*)⁷⁴ ... outer limbs (*mélos*) to look at ... every type within ... also the faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) of **the eyes** has houses (*hī*) and cavities (*spélaion*) and repositories (*apothékē*) and stores (or: depots) within, so that every *image* it might see, whether good or evil, whether loveable or detestable or lustful (*-epithymía*), it can receive into its storehouses (*tamieíon*) and repositories (*apothékē*). Also, when the faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) of **the eyes** is pleased to send out the *image* that it saw and took in, it can go into its storehouses (*tamieíon*) at the time and think and seek ... and it brings it out and gives it to the *questioner* (*apaitētēs*) who *requested* it and the one who wanted it. Whether it be something from lust (*epithymía*) ... or an *image* of love or ... something hateful. And thus shall that faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) [of the eyes] produce and do what it does in each category.

139,15 The faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) of **the ears** has its own storehouses (*tamieíon*) also. Every sound it might receive, whether good or evil, shall be taken in and placed in its houses and inner repositories (*apothékē*), and it is guarded in its [storehouses (*tamieíon*)] ... for a thousand days. After a thousand days, if someone comes and *asks* that faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) about the sound that it heard at this time and took into its storehouses (*tamieíon*), immediately it shall go into its repositories (*apothékē*) and seek and review and search after this word and send it out from where it was first put, the place in which it was kept.

139,25 In like order, the faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) of **scent** shall function just as that of the eyes and that of the auditory organs. Every odour it shall smell it shall take into it and deposit in its inner storehouses (*tamieíon*). Every time it will be asked by a *questioner* (*apaitētēs*), it shall go in ... and ... storehouse (*spélaion*) and **remember** ... only these things.

73 Gardner: 'I.e. the physical and mental senses are distributed in the appropriate places throughout the body'.

74 Gardner: 'Lit. "thought"'

- 140,1 However, even the mouth and the tongue within it, and the taste organ, have a faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) dwelling in them.
- 140,3 Again, that faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) too, of **taste**, has thus cavities (*spélaion*) and repositories (*apothékē*) set apart for it. It too receives these tastes and gathers them in. And at any moment when someone will ask of a taste, if ... it shall send it out and remember that taste. It shall snare and give even the mark of that taste; give its **memory** to the *questioner* (*apaitētēs*) who *asks* for it.
- 140,10 Again, the faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) of **touch** by the hands is also so: When it might touch, touch shall receive its **memory**. And it takes it in to its inner repository (*apothékē*) until someone will *ask* this faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) for the **memory**. Immediately, it shall go in again and bring out the **memory** of this touch that it made and give it to whoever *asks* for it.
- 140,16 And the faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) of *the heart that rules over them all* is much the most like this. Everything that **these five faculties** (*Enthýmēsis*) will receive and put in store (*parathékē, depositum*) for the faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) of the heart it shall receive and guard. Any time that they will *ask* for their deposit it shall send out and give everything that they gave to it.

It is striking that Augustine, when speaking of memory in *conf.* 10,12–13, uses much the same metaphors. He starts speaking of the *campi et lata praetoria memoriae* (the fields and vast palaces of memory) where are the treasures of innumerable *imagines* (images, representations, ideas) of all kinds of objects brought in by sense perception. The same is said by Mani: every *image* the faculty of the eyes may see is received into its ‘storehouses’ and ‘repositories’. The same goes for the other senses: the faculties of the **ears, scent, taste, and touch**. One may compare what Augustine says in *conf.* 10,13: it is by the eyes (*per oculos*), by the ears (*per aures*), by the nostrils (*per aditum narium*), by the door of the mouth (*per oris aditum*) and through the touch (*a sensu ... totius corporis quid durum, quid molle* etc.) that all sense perceptions enter memory.

In *conf.* 10,13 Augustine continues: ‘Memory’s huge cavern (one may compare Mani’s cavities, *spélaia*), with its mysterious, secret and indescribable nooks and crannies (one may compare Mani’s storehouses, *tamieña*, and repositories, *apothékai*), receives all these perceptions, to be *recalled* when needed and reconsidered’. The act of recalling in memory is indicated here by the verb *retractare*, but earlier, in *conf.* 10,12, Augustine speaks of *posco*, ‘I request’, and the same is time and again said by Mani (see the first paragraph of *Kephalaion*

56, p. 138,26–29): ‘Whenever they will be questioned about what is deposited in their internal ‘storehouses’ (*tamieĩa*), they bring out what they have received within and give it to the ‘questioner’ who requested it of them’. The same ‘asking’ or ‘requesting’ by the ‘questioner’ is repeated in nearly all the *Kephalaion*’s following paragraphs.

Augustine’s next sentence in *conf.* 10,13 has striking parallels in Mani’s text as well: ‘Each of them enters into memory, each by its own gate, and is put on deposit there’ (quae omnia suis quaeque *foribus* intrant ad eam et reponuntur in ea). One may compare Mani’s speaking of the *doors* of the senses in *Kephalaia* 141,14–17⁷⁵ and later his speaking of the ‘orifices’ or openings of the body for (the organs of) sight, hearing, smell and speaking in *Kephalaia* 142,1ff.⁷⁶ These orifices are *guarded* by *guards*; I shall return to this shortly.

Of course one might say that all these parallels are coincidental and that, in actual fact, they are due to a common philosophical-rhetorical tradition. Such a widespread and strong tradition indeed existed. For the sources of Augustine’s overall theory of memory and the role of the five senses reference may be made to classical works such as the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*,⁷⁷ Cicero’s *De oratore*,⁷⁸ Quintilian’s *Institutiones*⁷⁹ and some other authors such as (possibly) Aristotle.⁸⁰ Perhaps we may also say that Mani (and his famous disciple Addai *sive* Adimantus, if he is the real author of the *Kephalaia*) participated in that com-

75 *Keph.* 141,14–17 (Gardner, 148): ‘Once again the enlightener (*phōstér*) speaks: Indeed, watchmen are at these doors guarding them, and bolts are fastened on the doors at the hands of the guards that guard them!’

76 *Keph.* 142,2 ff. (Gardner, 149): ‘The enlightener (*phōstér*) says: This body (*sōma*) too is like the mighty camp (*parembolē*). And the gates of the camp (*parembolē*) with their guards are like the orifices and organs (*aisthētéria*) of the body (*sōma*). Now, the orifices of the body (*sōma*) are of sight, hearing, and smell; and they that send out words.’ Etc.

77 The anonymous work (formerly often attributed to Cicero) seems to date from the late 80s BCE; esp. book 3,28–40 is on memory. Cf. the edition (with English translation by Harry Kaplan) in *LCL* 403: [Cicero,] *Ad C. Herennium libri IV, De ratione dicendi*, London-Cambridge, MA: W. Heinemann-Harvard University Press 1954 (repr. 1964).

78 Esp. *De orat.* 2,350–360. Cf. the edition (with English translation by E.W. Sutton & H. Rackhem) in *LCL* 348: Cicero, *De oratore*, 1–2, London-Cambridge, MA: W. Heinemann-Harvard University Press 1942 (repr. 1979).

79 Esp. *Inst.* 11,2,1–26. Cf. the edition (with English translation by D.A. Russell) in *LCL* 494: Quintilian, *Institutiones oratoriae*, books 11–12, Cambridge, MA-London: Harvard University Press 2002.

80 But only minimal and in all probability only via Plotinus, *Enn.* 1v,25–32 and 1–17. Cf. e.g. A. Solignac, ‘La mémoire selon saint Augustin’, *BA* 14,557–567, esp. 558 where he concludes: ‘Par rapport à celles de ces prédécesseurs [here: Aristotle and Plotinus], les positions d’Augustin sont originales, puisque, comme nous le verrons, il rétablit l’existence d’une mémoire intellectuelle, tout en niant le caractère imaginaire de ses représentations’.

mon philosophical and rhetorical tradition. Thus, Augustine may have been rhetorical-philosophically influenced in this way as well.

But the parallels with the just quoted Manichaean text *Kephalaion* 56 are most striking indeed. And apart from all these parallels (correspondences I could not find in any classical author) there is more. Augustine's theory of the five senses as the basis of memory is incomplete without his speaking of a sixth sense which governs (*praesidet*) the other senses. This is the *sensus interior*. Augustine briefly speaks of it in *conf.* 1,31, but in more elaborate form already in the much earlier written second book of *De libero arbitrio* (2,8–10).⁸¹ Correspondingly, in *Kephalaion* 56 (140,16) Mani states that the faculty (*Enthýmēsis*) of the heart rules over all senses.

2.5 'Great Is the Faculty of Memory' (*conf.* 10,26), but God Transcends It (*conf.* 10,37)

In the following sections of *conf.* 10 Augustine continues his speaking of memory and the senses, the *uis* or faculty of memory, its storerooms (which are also called *cellae* in 10,16; one may compare Mani's cellarman, *kellaritēs*, in *Kephalaia* 140,27) and so on. He summarizes his considerations in 10,26: 'Great is the faculty of memory (*Magna uis est memoriae*), an awe-inspiring mystery'. It has its 'wide fields' (*campi*), its 'caves' and 'caverns' (*antra* and *cavernae*; cf. Mani's cavities, *spēlaia*). Here Augustine is in search of God. He goes on and explicitly states that he *does* find God in his memory: 'Since the time I learned to know You, You remain in my *memoria* (memory, consciousness) and there I find You' (10,35). But 'where then did I find You?' Of course, so Augustine's reasoning, *originally* I did not find God *in my memory*. No, God far transcends my memory! Initially I did not find God in my memory, since He was far above it: 'I found You in Yourself above me': '*in te supra me*'.

2.6 God as Beauty (*conf.* 10,38)

One should note that, thus far in *conf.* 10, Augustine has spoken of finding God in his memory filled by the senses. But so he tells us, this does not pertain to his first becoming acquainted with God. In his inward bound search he went beyond memory and even beyond his rational mind (*animus*).

After having described this search for God, Augustine arrives at the perhaps most famous passage in the *Confessions*: he tells of the moment he found God. The passage, in my view, is only fully understandable within a Manichaean

81 The work *lib. arb.* deals with the question 'unde malum?'. Begun already in Rome between fall 387 and fall 388 and finished in Africa c. 391–395, it is full of anti-Manichaean arguments.

context. Not only in Platonic texts,⁸² but in particular in Manichaean texts God is time and again conceived of as being beautiful, fair, and bright.⁸³ When Augustine tried to find God outside of himself, 'he plunged into those fair things created by God'. At that stage he himself was *deformis*, 'deformed'; this is the same word he uses in *conf.* 4,31 where he describes his Manichaean past.⁸⁴ But, as in Manichaeism, God is here perceived by the five senses, and responded to with love. Already in a Manichaean psalm it runs: 'since I knew Thee (...) I have loved Thee'.⁸⁵ The full parallel passage of Augustine's *conf.* 10,38 runs as follows:

Sero te amaui, pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam noua, sero te amaui! Et ecce intus eras et ego foris et ibi te quaerebam, et in ista formosa, quae fecisti, deformis inruebam. Mecum eras, et tecum non eram. Ea me tenebant longe a te, quae si in te non essent, non essent. Vocasti et clamasti et rupisti surditatem meam, coruscasti, splenduisti et fugasti caecitatem meam, flagrasti,⁸⁶ et duxi spiritum et anhelum tibi, gustavi et esurio et sitio, tetigisti me, et exarsi in pacem tuam.

CCL 27,175

Late have I loved You, o Beauty so ancient and so new, late have I loved You. And see, You were within and I outside, and there I searched for You. And I, deformed, plunged into those fair things which You made. You were with me, but I was not with You! Those things kept me far from You, which unless they had their existence in You, had no existence at all. You called and cried aloud and forced open my deafness. You did gleam and shine,

82 E.g. Plotinus, *Enn.* 1,6.

83 E.g. *Psalm-Book* 61,14–15 (for Jesus); 164,11: '... fair is God ...'; 174,11: 'Fair ... God ...'. Fair here is the refrain. Etc. For God and other figures of the heavenly world as Beauty (Coptic *caïe*), see also e.g. *Psalm-Book* 70,11 (Jesus); 84,31 (the image of the holy Maiden), 95,6 (Jesus 'my beauty'); 148, 30 (the beauty of the Maiden); 166,32 (Jesus as 'beauty of the fair one'); 214, 8 (the beauty of the heavenly Envoy); *Kephalaia* 88,5 (the Beauty of the King of Glory); etc.

84 *Conf.* 4,31: '... cum deformiter et sacrilega turpitudine in doctrina pietatis errarem'.

85 *Psalm-Book* 169,21. Another important Manichaean text to be referred to seems to be *Keph.* 64,13 ff. because here the five great light limbs in each of the twelve light limbs of the Father of Greatness are enumerated as 1. light [which relates to the sense of sight]; 2. perfume [connected with the sense of smell]; 3. voice [connected with the sense of hearing]; etc. Unfortunately the text which enumerates five [limbs] came to us in a corrupted state, but it is clear that God's qualities or limbs (*mēlos*) are perceived by the senses.—The whole text of *conf.* 10,38 seems to deserve a more extensive analysis in light of Manichaean parallels and (possible) sources.

86 Several ancient mss. and most modern editors read: 'fragrasti'. I follow this reading in my translation.

and chase away my blindness. You were fragrant and I drew in my breath, and now pant for You. I have tasted You, and I feel but hunger and thirst for You. You touched me and I am inflamed for Your peace.

3 Conclusions

Here, at this climactic point, I stop the analysis of the first part of *conf.* 10, leaving the remainder (10,39–70) as a subject of future research. Yet, the famous passage *Sero te amaui* is the quite natural ending of Augustine's dealing with the theme of God, memory, and beauty. It is at this juncture that I may wind up with some provisional conclusions.

Firstly, it is crystal clear that Hippo's bishop, when writing Book 10 some years after 400, still has his former co-religionists at the forefront of his mind. To a certain extent they determine his manner of reasoning and, conceivably, even the theme he is dealing with.

Secondly, apart from many small reminiscences of Manichaeism turns of phrase, it is also clear that pivotal notions such as Augustine's concepts of God, memory and beauty are strongly influenced by Manichaean concepts, as a rule in an anti-thetical manner, but also in a positive, thetical way.

Thirdly, Augustine seems to have been acquainted with the contents of the Manichaean *Kephalaion* 56, either in a direct way (i.e., by hearing or reading a Latin version of this 'Chapter' of Mani's teaching) or indirectly (i.e., by hearing the essentials of this teaching from Manichaean contemporaries or reading them in Manichaean books).

Fourthly, Augustine's familiarity with Manichaean teaching had a deep effect not only on him, but via his immense influence, also on our intellectual history. Or, stated otherwise, essential elements of 'Western' thought on memory, as well as on God as being Beauty, appear to have their origins in Mani's teaching.

Christ as God's Hand (*conf.* 1–13)

1 An Overview of the Texts from Augustine's *Confessions*, with Brief Interpretation

*The *Confessions* contain a considerable number of passages in which Augustine makes mention of God's Hand.¹ I provide here a survey (with translation and brief commentary) of those texts in which Augustine either explicitly speaks of 'Your Hand', or more specifically mentions 'Your Right Hand'. My overview follows the sequence of the *Confessions*, while in the translation and brief commentary the focus is on those passages which may be considered as typical of Augustine's wording.

Texts which explicitly make mention of God's (Right) Hand comprise the following ones:

- i. *Conf.* 1,24 (CCL 27,13): *Exaudi, domine, deprecationem meam, ne deficiat anima mea sub disciplina tua neque deficiam in confitendo tibi miserationes tuas, quibus eruisti me ab omnibus uicis meis pessimis, ut dulcescas mihi super omnes*

* First publication as "Misisti manum tuam ex alto": Manichaean Imagery of Christ as God's Hand in Augustine's *Confessions*?, *Vigiliae Christianae* 72 (2018) 369–389, slightly adapted in J. van Oort, *Mani and Augustine. Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2020, 89–110.

1 Or, as we will see in three cases, 'Hands'. It may be remarked from the outset that Augustine, although aware of the fact that several biblical texts speak of God's Hands, in his interpretation reduces the metaphor to relate in essence to one Hand, i.e., Christ as God's (Right) Hand. Apart from the references given below, special mention may be made of his remarks on *manus* [pl.] *Dei* in *en. in Ps.* 118, s. 18,1 (CCL 40,1723): '*Manus ergo Dei sunt potestas Dei. Aut si pluralis numerus eos mouet, quia non dictum est, manus tua, sed, manus tuae, accipiant manus Dei, uirtutem et sapientiam Dei, quod utrumque unus dictus est Christus* [cf. 1 Cor. 1:24]: *qui etiam intellegitur brachium Domini, ubi legitur: Et brachium Domini cui reuelatum est* [Isa. 53:1]? *Aut accipiant manus Dei, Filium et Spiritum sanctum ... Liberum est igitur quomodo intellegatur manus Dei: dum tamen nec ea quae facit manibus, Verbo facere negetur*.' From the passage and its context, it is not clear whose opinion Augustine had in view. The accepted metaphor of Christ and the Spirit as the two hands of God had been well known since Irenaeus (*haer.* 5,28,4). Important as well for the view of the later Augustine is his discussion in *en. in Ps.* 118, s. 32,5 on *Ps.* 118:173 [CCL 40,1774–1775]: '*Potest sic accipi, Fiat manus tua, ut manus Dei Christus intelligatur; iuxta illud Isaiae: Et brachium Domini cui reuelatum est* [Isa. 53:1]? *Non enim erat factus Vnigenitus, cum per eum facta sint omnia* [cf. Ioh. 1:3]; *sed factus est ex semine Dauid* [cf. Rom. 1:3] *ut esset Iesus, id est Saluator, qui iam erat Creator. Sed cum familiare sit scripturae: Fiat manus tua et: Facta est manus Domini* [e.g. Ez. 1:3], *nescio utrum possit hic sensus*

seductiones, quas sequebar, et amem te ualidissime et amplexer manum tuam totis praecordiis meis et eruas me ab omni temptatione usque in finem.

Transl.: Hear, Lord, my entreaty (Ps. 60:2), that my soul may not faint under Your discipline (Ps. 83:3; 118:81), nor let me faint in confessing to You all Your mercies (Ps. 106:8.14.21.31) by which You rescued me from all my evil ways (e.g. 4 Reg. 17:13), that You may become more sweet to me than all the seductions I was pursuing, and that I may most strongly love You, and grasp *Your Hand* with all my heart, and You may rescue me from every temptation (Ps. 17:30) until the end (e.g. Ps. 15:11; 37:7).

Comm.: As a matter of fact, commentators have detected in this passage several reminiscences and even literal quotes of biblical texts.² In this context, it may be specified that Augustine not only uses the (at first hearing: only biblical) metaphor for God's Hand, but also stresses that God rescues ('eruisti *me ab omnibus uis meis pessimis*'; 'eruas *me ab omni temptatione usque in finem*'). He also speaks of his own activity: in order to be rescued, he may grasp (*amplexor*: 'to grasp', 'clasp', 'embrace') God's Hand. As we will see later more clearly from his *conf.*, in this work God's Hand often turns out to be a metaphor for Christ.

ii. *Conf.* 2,3 (CCL 27,18–19): ... *domine, qui formas etiam propaginem mortis nostrae, potens imponere lenem manum ad temperamentum spinarum a paradiso tuo secluserum?*

Transl.: ... o Lord, You who shape the propagation of our mortal race, imposing *Your gentle Hand* to soften the thorns which have no place in Your paradise?

Comm.: God's gentle Hand later returns as God's *manus mitissima et misericordiae* (*conf.* 6,7), which also has a close parallel in 6,13: '*manu ualidissima et misericordissima eruisti eum tu*'. As in these later texts, we may be entitled to understand God's gentle Hand to be (a symbol of) Christ.

iii. *Conf.* 3,19 (CCL 27,37): *Et misisti manum tuam ex alto et de hac profunda caligine eruisti animam meam, cum pro me fleret ad te mea mater, fidelis tua, amplius quam flent matres corporea funera.*

Transl.: And You put forth *Your Hand* from above (Ps. 143:7), and You rescued my soul (Ps. 85:13) out of this deep fog, because my mother, Your faithful one, wept for me before You, more than mothers weep for the bodily death of their children.

in eis locis omnibus obtineri. Sane ubi audimus quod sequitur: Concupiui salutare tuum, Domine [Ps. 118:74]; etiam nolentibus omnibus inimicis, salutare Dei nobis Christus occurrat ...'—It may also be noted that in the conf., apart from dextera, 'brachium', 'palma', or other synonyms for 'manus' do not occur.

² As indicated in the translation. It should be noticed that Augustine often associatively alludes

Comm.: The two evidently biblical quotes come from the Psalms and, once again, the verb *eruo* ('rescue') is being used. For instance, it is clear from *en. in Ps.* 143,14 that, for Augustine, 'Your Hand' is a metaphor for Christ.³ The noun *caligo* ('fog', 'mist', 'smog', 'darkness') here and in the following paragraph (3,20: *adhuc uolui et inuolui illa caligine*) in a subtle way seems to refer to Manichaeism, being indicative of the race of darkness in the Latin version of Mani's *Epistula fundamenti* (as quoted by Augustine, *c. ep. fund.* 19: *gens caliginis ac fumi plena*). Furthermore, to identify the weeping of Augustine's mother as bringing salvation may recall the Manichaeans' opinion on salvational 'weeping', which went far beyond mourning the dead;⁴ the introducing *cum* is a 'cum causale', not a 'cum historicum'.

iv. *Conf.* 5,1 (CCL 27,57): *Accipe sacrificium confessionum mearum de manu linguae meae, quam formasti et excitasti, ut confiteatur nomini tuo, et sana omnia ossa mea, et dicant: domine, quis similis tibi? Neque enim docet te, quid in se agatur, qui tibi confitetur, quia oculum tuum non excludit cor clausum nec manum tuam repellit duritia hominum, sed soluis eam, cum uoles, aut miserans aut uindicans, et non est qui se abscondat a calore tuo.*

Transl.: Accept the sacrifice (Ps. 50:21) of my confessions from the hand of my tongue, which You have formed and stirred up to confess Your name (Ps. 53:8), and heal all my bones and let them say: Lord, who is like You (Ps. 6:3; 34:10)? And yet he who makes confession to You is not instructing You of what is happening within him, for a closed heart does not exclude Your eye nor does man's hardness of heart repel *Your Hand*, but You melt it when You will, either in mercy or in punishment, and there is none who can hide himself from Your heat (Ps. 18:7).

Comm.: This 'most formal preface since Bk. 1'⁵ is full of quotations from the Psalms, while the wording 'hand of my tongue' is perhaps reminiscent of

to biblical texts without quoting them literally, and that he rather freely combines such texts. Regarding the Psalms, these and other features have been thoroughly studied by G.N. Knauer, *Psalmenzitate in Augustins Konfessionen*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1955. It is on his analyses that many of the references in my translations are based.

3 *En. in Ps.* 143,14 (CCL 40,2083): 'Emitte manum tuam ex alto. Quid postea? quid in fine? Quomodo uincit corpus Christi? Caelesti adiutorio. Veniet enim ipse Dominus in uoce archangeli, et in tuba Dei descendit de caelo [1Thess. 4:15]; ipse Saluator corporis, manus Dei'.

4 A number of Manichaean texts (and rites) imply salvational weeping; see ch. 3: 'Monnica's Bishop and the "filius istarum lacrimarum"'.
 5 J.J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: Confessions*, II, *Commentary on Books 1–7*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992, 281.

Prov. 18:21 (*'mors et vita in manibus linguae'*).⁶ However, one may wonder why Augustine uses the word 'hand' here, as he does in the curious expressions 'hand of my heart' (*manus cordis*) in 10,12 and 'hand of my mouth' (*manus oris mei*) in 11,13. As we will see in the course of our analysis, it might be that he is also using the metaphor of the hand in reminiscence of its special significance in Manichaean belief and practice. Although the wording 'Your Hand' may firstly be interpreted as being a biblical reminiscence, its association with Augustine's offering of his 'sacrifice'⁷ may reveal the explicit Manichaean link between a person's offering and God's Hand.

A similar Manichaean context seems to be evoked by the enigmatic (and, up to the present, passed over in commentaries and hence unexplained) statement: 'And yet he who makes confession to You is not instructing You of what is happening within him'. Manichaean confession (be it by the Auditors or the Elect) directly effects both men's *and* God's existence, because God and the human soul as *pars Dei* are of the same light substance. The statement that immediately follows ('for a closed heart does not exclude Your eye nor does man's hardness of heart repel Your Hand') may function as an explicit warning against this Manichaean view.

v. *Conf.* 5,13 (CCL 27,64): *Manus enim tuae, deus meus, in abdito prouidentiae tuae non deserebant animam meam, et de sanguine cordis matris meae per lacrimas eius diebus et noctibus pro me sacrificabatur tibi, et egisti mecum miris modis. Tu illud egisti, deus meus. Nam a domino gressus hominis diriguntur, et uiam eius uolet. Aut quae procuratio salutis praeter manum tuam reficientem quae fecisti?*

Transl.: For *Your Hands*, my God, in *Your* hidden providence, did not desert my soul, and out of the blood of my mother's heart, through her tears that she poured out by day and by night, was a sacrifice offered for me to *You*, and *You* dealt with me in wondrous manners. *You*, my God, did it. For by the Lord the steps of man are directed, and He chooses his way. Or what other provision is there for our salvation except through *Your Hand* remaking what *You* have made?

Comm.: These sentences conclude the story of Augustine's meeting with Faustus and his ensuing estrangement from the Manichaeans. The role of God's

6 Cf. Knauer, *Psalmenzitate*, 72 and esp. 150–151. Cf. e.g. *en. in Ps.* 72,30: 'Why, then, does Scripture speak of "the hands of the tongue"? It means, in the power of the tongue, for "out of your mouth you will be justified, and out of your mouth you will be condemned" (Mt. 12:37).'

7 On the *conf.* as 'sacrifice', see already M. Zepf, *Augustins Confessiones*, Tübingen: Mohr 1926, 9.

Hand(s)⁸ in this whole event is stressed. Remarkable as well is the sacrificial role which (once again, cf. 3,19) is assigned to his mother's tears.

vi. *Conf.* 6,6 (CCL 27,77): ... *resistens* manibus tuis, *qui medicamenta fidei conficisti et sparsisti super morbos orbis terrarum et tantam illis auctoritatem tribuisti*.

Transl.: ... resisting the Hands of You, who has prepared the medicines of faith, and has spread them over the diseases of the whole world and has given them such great authority.

Comm.: With reference to Ps. 16:8 ('*resistentibus dexteræ tuæ custodi me*'), Knauer considers the *manus tuæ* to be a metaphor for Christ.⁹ This seems to be confirmed by Augustine's speaking of the 'medicines of faith': Christ as *medicus* with his *medicina* is a well-known figure of speech in his writings,¹⁰ for instance in *conf.* 9,35 (see below). Similarly, it was a well-known metaphor among the Manichaeans, for instance in their Psalms.¹¹

vii. *Conf.* 6,7 (CCL 27,78): *Deinde paulatim tu, domine, manu mitissima et misericordissima pertractans et componens cor meum ...*

Transl.: Then, little by little, You Lord, with Your most gentle and most merciful Hand, touched and calmed my heart ...

Comm.: Here the Hands of the previous lines of *conf.* 6,6 may—again, cf. 5,13—be considered as being one Hand, i.e., Christ.

viii. *Conf.* 6,13 (CCL 27,83): *Et inde tamen manu ualidissima et misericordissima eruisti eum tu ...*

Transl.: Nevertheless, from this You rescued him by Your most mighty and most merciful Hand ...

Comm.: The most merciful Hand of *conf.* 6,7 here returns in the case of Alypius' salvation, now also characterized as being 'most mighty'.

8 Cf. the plural 'Your Hands' in 13,1 and 20. Although Augustine accepts the possibility to see the plural as referring to Christ and the Spirit, in essence he considers it to be a metaphor for Christ. Cf. n. 1 above and the commentary on 13,1 and 13,20. The same context of creation (and recreation) through Christ is evoked by the concluding sentence of our passage: '*Aut quæ procuratio salutis præter manum tuam reficientem quæ fecisti?*'

9 Knauer, *Psalmenzitate*, 121–122 n. 4.

10 Cf. e.g. R. Arbesmann, 'Christ the *medicus humilis* in St. Augustine', *Augustinus Magister*, 11, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1954, 623–629; *idem*, 'The Concept of *Christus medicus* in St. Augustine', *Traditio* 10 (1954) 1–28; P.C.J. Eijkenboom, *Het Christus-Medicusmotief in de preken van Sint Augustinus*, Assen: Van Gorcum 1960.

11 See the quotes from the Coptic Manichaean Psalter in my 'Manichaean Imagery of Christ as God's Right Hand' [final version in *Mani and Augustine. Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2020, repr. 2023, ch. 7], section 2.2.1.

ix. *Conf.* 6,21 (CCL 27,88): ... *et deligatus morbo carnis mortifera suauitate trahebam catenam meam solui timens et quasi concusso uulnere repellens uerba bene suadentis tamquam manum soluentis.*

Transl.: ... and fettered by the disease of the flesh and its deadly sweetness, I dragged my chain, fearing to be loosed; and, as if it struck my wound, I pushed aside the words of good advice, as it were *the Hand* that would set me free.

Comm.: The passage refers to Alypius' advice on abstinence from marrying a wife, which advice Augustine was unable to follow due to his being fettered by the bonds of carnal lust. The good advice is compared with God's Hand which would set Augustine free; cf. e.g. the beginning of 9,1: '*Dirupisti uincula mea*' (= Ps. 115:16).

x. *Conf.* 6,24 (CCL 27,90): *Ex quo consilio deridebas nostra et tua praeparabas nobis daturus escam in oportunitate et aperturus manum atque impleturus animas nostras benedictione.*

Transl.: Out of that council (Prov. 19:21; Ps. 32:11) You laughed at our plans and prepared Your own, to give us food in due time and to open *Your Hand* and fill our souls with blessing (Ps. 144:15–16).

Comm.: The plan of Augustine and his friends for an ideal community fell through. As in 6,17 where Alypius, Nebridius and Augustine were looking to God 'to give them their food (*escam*) in due time' (Ps. 114:15; 103:27), so here the same metaphor appears, now with the mentioning of God's Hand. In wondering why, in his *conf.*, Augustine so often uses alimentary metaphors, one may find a likely explanation in his anti-Manichaean stance.¹² The real food he (and others) will discover is Christ (cf. e.g. 7,24; 13,23; 13,32); accordingly, there seems to be good reason to interpret God's Hand here also as referring to Christ.

xi. *Conf.* 6,26 (CCL 27,90): *Tibi laus, tibi gloria, fons misericordiarum! Ego fiebam miserior et tu propinquior. Aderat iam iamque dextera tua raptura me de caeno et ablatura,¹³ et ignorabam.*

Transl.: Praise to You, glory to You, fountain of all mercies! I was becoming more miserable and You closer. Already *Your Right Hand* drew nearer to seize me and pull me out of the dirt, and I did not know it.

12 L.C. Ferrari, 'The "Food of Truth" in Augustine's Confessions', *AS 9* (1978) 1–14; J.D. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, 2, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 331–332.

13 A considerable number of MSS read *ablutura*: 'to wash me clean', i.e., by baptism.

Comm.: Manichaean texts frequently speak of the Right Hand which saves from the misery of this worldly existence.¹⁴ Already Mani used the metaphor: '*Sed et dextera luminis tueatur et eripiat uos ab omni incursione maligna et a laqueis mundi*': 'And may indeed the Right Hand of the Light protect and rescue you from every evil incursion and from the snares of the world' (*c. ep. fund.* 11, *CSEL* 25,207; cf. *c. Fel.* 1,16, *CSEL* 25,819). Moreover, it may seem to be depicted in Manichaean art.¹⁵ Augustine, like Mani and his followers, often explicitly considered the Right Hand to be Christ. With Knauer, we may see '*iam iamque*' as an expression of 'steigend[er] Erwartung';¹⁶ this rising expectation will be fulfilled in Augustine's conversion as described in *conf.* 8.¹⁷

xii. *Conf.* 7,12 (*CCL* 27,101): *Et residebat tumor meus ex occulta manu medicinae tuae, aciesque conturbata et contenebrata mentis meae acri collyrio salubrium dolorum de die in diem sanabatur.*

Transl.: And my swollen pride subsided through the secret Hand of Your medicine, and the troubled and darkened eye of my mind was healed by the sharp eye-salve of salutary sorrows from day to day.

Comm.: For Augustine, both the Hand of Your medicine (cf. *conf.* 9,35 and 10,69 below) and the eye-salve (*collyrium*; cf. *Apoc.* 3:18 and e.g. *Io. eu. tr.* 2,16) refer to Christ.¹⁸ Manichaean texts abundantly testify to the Manichaeans' speaking of Christ as being both men's physician and medicine.¹⁹ The curious expression 'salutary sorrows' might be understood in line with the typical Manichaean thinking of 'salutary tears' in *conf.* 3,19 and 5,13. The whole paragraph 7,12 functions as a pivot at which juncture Augustine summarizes the preceding (i.e., mainly Manichaean) phase of his life before he starts his description of a new development, i.e., his becoming acquainted with 'some books of the Platonists'.

14 Cf. 'Manichaean Imagery of Christ as God's Hand' (n. 11), nearly *passim*.

15 See 'Manichaean Imagery', section 3: Testimonies from Manichaean Art?

16 Knauer, *Psalmenzitate*, 42 n. 1.

17 Or perhaps—if we follow the reading *ablutura* (as O'Donnell has most recently done in his *Augustine: Confessions*, I, *Introduction and Text*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992, 71; cf. II, 386)—in Augustine's baptism which is briefly mentioned in *conf.* 9. However, I deem this reading less likely: see the phrase '*dextera tua suscepit me et inde ablatum*' in 8,2 (text xv below).

18 Cf. his '*sanare tumorem*' in 7,24: '*uerbum enim tuum, aeterna ueritas ... sanans tumorem et nutriens amorem*'.

19 See 'Manichaean Imagery' (n. 11), in particular the quotes from the Coptic Manichaean Psalmbook in section 2.2.1.

xiii. *Conf.* 7,21 (CCL 27,106): *Et respexi alia et uidi tibi debere quia sunt et in te cuncta finita, sed aliter, non quasi in loco, sed quia tu es omnitenens manu ueritate ...*

Transl.: And I reflected upon other things and saw that to You they owe their being and that in You all things are finite, but in another way, not as though contained in a place, but because You hold all things in Your *Hand* of Truth ...

Comm.: ‘*Manu ueritate*’ may also be translated as ‘in/by Your Hand, in/by Your Truth’, but translating ‘*ueritate*’ as an appositional genitive seems preferable. Either way, Your Hand here appears to denote Christ, who is also the Truth (among the many instances in Augustine’s œuvre, see e.g. *en. in Ps.* 39,18: ‘*Vnde ueritas Christus? ego sum ueritas*’; *en. in Ps.* 103, s. 3,14: ‘*ueritas est, ueritas Christus est*’; *Io. eu. tr.* 46,4: ‘*quid est Christus? ueritas*’; *ep. Io. tr., tr.* 3: ‘*quis est Christus? ueritas*’).

xiv. *Conf.* 7,27 (CCL 27,111): *Et grauata est super nos manus tua ...*

Transl.: And Your Hand has grown heavy upon us (cf. *Ps.* 31:4) ...

Comm.: Your Hand here might denote Christ. In his *conf.*, Augustine sometimes speaks of humiliation and other chastisements as God’s manner to correct (cf. e.g. the passage 2,4: ... *et excessi omnia legitima tua nec euasi flagella tua ...* etc. and his speaking of *amaritudo* in 6,17: *Et in omni amaritudine, quae nostros saeculares actus de misericordia tua sequebatur ...*). Besides, he terms Christ as *uirga tui* in 9,17.

xv. *Conf.* 8,2 (CCL 27,114): ... *et dextera tua suscepit me et inde ablatum posuisti, ubi conualescerem ...*

Transl.: ... but Your Right Hand upheld me (*Ps.* 17:36; cf. 62:9) and took me thence and placed me where I could recover ...

Comm.: Early in the pivotal book telling Augustine’s conversion to Catholic Christianity, God’s Right Hand seems once again to denote Christ, while the text also resonates his rescuing²⁰ and being a physician. Manichaeans spoke of Christ in the same way.

xvi. *Conf.* 9,1 (CCL 27,133): *Tu autem, domine, bonus et misericors et dextera tua respiciens profunditatem mortis meae et a fundo cordis mei exhauriens abyssum corruptionis.*

²⁰ *Suscipio* also means ‘to take up’ and ‘adopt’; cf. e.g. Vergilius’ use. Perhaps the full quote resounds the Roman custom to take up a new-born child from the ground, signifying its rescue and acknowledgement.

Transl.: But You, Lord, are good and merciful (Ps. 85:12; 102:8), and *Your Right Hand* took notice of the profundity of my death and removed even from the bottom of my heart that abyss of corruption.

Comm.: At the beginning of the book relating his baptism, Augustine once more appears to speak of Christ in the metaphor of God's Right Hand. Many Manichaean texts not only contain this metaphor, but they also typically refer to this material world and—not least—the material body as 'the abyss'.²¹

xvii. *Conf.* 9,9 (CCL 27,138): *Et tu, domine, iam magnificaueras sanctum tuum, suscitans eum a mortuis et collocans ad dexteram tuam, unde mitteret ex alto promissionem suam, paracletum, spiritum ueritatis. Et miserat eum iam, sed ego nesciebam.*

Transl.: And You, Lord, had already magnified Your holy one (Ps. 4:4), raising him from the dead and placing him at *Your Right Hand* (Eph. 1:20), whence from on high he would send his promise (Lk. 24:49), the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth (John 14:16–17). And He had sent him already (cf. Acts 2:1–4), but I did not know it.

Comm.: 'Your Right Hand' here means the place, but at the same time seems to denote the person sitting there, i.e., Christ. The Manichaeans spoke of Christ in the same manner, but greatly differed in their view of the Holy Spirit. The whole paragraph and its context, having a strong anti-Manichaean focus and being dispersed with biblical quotes,²² opposes their opinion on Mani as being the Paraclete and Spirit of Truth, a view Augustine—in his ignorance—once shared.

xviii. *Conf.* 9,35 (CCL 27,153): *... exaudi me per medicinam uulnerum nostrorum, quae pependit in ligno et sedens ad dexteram tuam te interpellat pro nobis.*

Transl.: Hear me (e.g. Ps. 142:11) through the medicine of our wounds, who hung upon the wood (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13) and who, sitting at *Your Right Hand* (Ps. 109:1), makes intercession to You for us (Rom. 8:34).

21 For 'abyss' in the Coptic *Kephalaia* (ed. & transl. H.J. Polotsky, A. Böhlig & W.-P. Funk, *Kephalaia*, Band I, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1940–2000), see *Keph.* 29,29; 40,2; 41,19; etc. Cf. I. Gardner, *The Kephalaia of the Teacher. The Edited Coptic Manichaean Texts in Translation with Commentary*, Leiden-New York-Köln: E.J. Brill 1995 (repr. Leiden-Boston: Brill 2016), 33; 45; 46; etc. The Coptic Manichaean Psalmbook (ed. & transl. C.R.C. Allberry, *A Manichaean Psalm-Book*, Part II, *Manichaean Manuscripts of the Chester Beatty Collection* II, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1938) speaks of 'the abyss' on nearly each page.

22 See e.g. A. Kotzé, 'Reading Psalm 4 to the Manichaeans', VC 55 (2001) 119–136.

Comm.: Again we encounter Christ at God's Right Hand, a biblical image well known to both Augustine and the Manichaeans. The same is not true, however, for the metaphor of Christ as medicine: strictly speaking it is not biblical, but obviously shared by both Augustine²³ and his former coreligionists.²⁴

xix. *Conf.* 10,5 (CCL 27,157): *Animus ille hoc faciat fraternus, non extraneus, non filiorum alienorum, quorum os locutum est uanitatem, et dextera eorum dextera iniquitatis ...*

Transl.: Let it be a brotherly mind that does this,²⁵ not the mind of a stranger nor that of the sons of strangers, whose mouth speaks vanity, and their *right hand* is a *right hand* of iniquity (Ps. 143:7–8).

Comm.: Although in its second part a 'simple' quote from Ps. 143, this sentence might be a direct stab at the Manichaeans' concept of the Right Hand, as may be evidenced both by the context and the quotes from the same Psalm directed against the Manichaeans elsewhere in the *conf.*²⁶ The whole paragraph 5 is a plea for true Christian brotherhood and may be read in contrasting parallel with Augustine's former Manichaean brotherhood as, for instance, described in *conf.* 4,13.

xx. *Conf.* 10,42 (CCL 27,177): *Numquid non potens est manus tua, deus omnipotens, sanare omnes languores animae meae atque abundantiore gratia tua lasciuos motus etiam mei soporis extinguere?*

Transl.: Is not *Your Hand* able (Num. 11:23), almighty God, to heal all the diseases (Ps. 102:3; Mt. 4:23) of my soul and by Your more abundant grace to extinguish even the lascivious stirrings of my sleep?

Comm.: The passage apparently interweaves Num. 11:23 ('*Numquid ... manus tua*') and Ps. 102:3 ('*sanare omnes languores*'). Again, the Hand of God, which heals all ills (cf. Mt. 4:23), seems to denote Christ.

xxi. *Conf.* 10,44 (CCL 27,178): *His temptationibus cotidie conor resistere et inuoco dexteram tuam et ad te refero aestus meos, quia consilium mihi de hac re nondum stat.*

23 See in the *conf.*, among many other texts, the passages quoted from 7,12 above and 10,69 (as well as 10,42 and 10,44!) below. Cf. e.g. *ep.* 63,2: '*... sub illius medicinalem dexteram confugiendo sanaremur*'.

24 See the many texts quoted in 'Manichaean Imagery' (n. 11).

25 Sc. 'love in me what You teach us to be worthy of love, and deplore in me what You teach us to be deplorable'.

26 E.g. *conf.* 3,19 (above); 11,40 ('*Videant itaque nullum tempus esse posse creatura et desinant istam uanitatem loqui*'; cf. Ps. 143:8).

Transl.: Every day I try to resist these temptations, and I invoke *Your Right Hand* and I bring my impulses before You, because in this matter I have not yet achieved a resolution.

Comm.: As in the just quoted case of his sexual impulses, Augustine here invokes God's Right Hand—i.e., in all likelihood, Christ—to cure his temptations in the matter of eating and drinking.

xxii. *Conf.* 10,66 (CCL 27,191): *Ideoque consideraui languores peccatorum meorum in cupiditate triplici et dexteram tuam inuocaui ad salutem meam.*

Transl.: So, then, have I considered the diseases of my sins in that threefold concupiscence (cf. 1Jn. 2:16) and invoked *Your Right Hand* to my salvation.

Comm.: Again the invocation of God's Right Hand, which seems to refer to Christ as the physician who cures.

xxiii. *Conf.* 10,69 (CCL 27,193): *Merito mihi spes ualida in illo est, quod sanabis omnes languores meos per eum, qui sedet ad dexteram tuam et te interpellat pro nobis: alioquin desperarem. Multi enim et magni sunt idem languores, multi sunt et magni; sed amplior est medicina tua.*

Transl.: With good reason is my hope fixed on him, because You will heal all my diseases (Ps. 102:3; Mt. 4:23) through him, who sits at *Your Right Hand* (Ps. 109:5) and intercedes with You for us (Rom. 8:34); otherwise, I would despair. Many and great are those diseases, many and great indeed, but wider reaching is Your medicine.

Comm.: Near the end of the book in which Augustine reflects on his present state, he once again evokes the image of Christ at God's Right Hand²⁷ and stresses that Christ is God's medicine.

xxiv. *Conf.* 11,4 (CCL 27,196): *Obsecro per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum filium tuum, uirum dexteræ tuæ, filium hominis, quem confirmasti tibi mediatorem tuum et nostrum, per quem nos quaesisti non quaerentes te ... per eum te obsecro, qui sedet ad dexteram tuam et te interpellat pro nobis, in quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiæ et scientiæ absconditi.*

27 And, at the same time, being God's Right Hand; cf. e.g. the quoted passages from Book 10 above. As in the NT and—as we saw in 'Manichaean Imagery' (n. 11)—in Manichaean parlance, Christ is described both as sitting at God's Right Hand and being God's Right Hand. For the NT manner of speaking, see e.g. L. Hurtado, 'Two Case Studies in Earliest Christological Readings of Biblical Texts', in: M.R. Malcolm & M. Keynes (eds.), *All that the Prophets Have Declared: The Appropriation of Scripture in the Emergence of Christianity*, Carlisle: Paternoster Press 2015, 3–23.

Transl.: I beseech through our Lord Jesus Christ Your son, the man of *Your Right Hand*, the son of man, whom You have established for Yourself (Ps. 79:18) as Your mediator and ours (1 Tim. 2:5), through whom You sought us when we were not seeking You (Rom. 10:20; cf. Isa. 65:1) ... I beseech You through him, who sits at *Your Right Hand* and intercedes to You for us (Rom. 8:34), in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3).

Comm.: Christ is both the man of God's Right Hand and He who sits at God's Right Hand. The words 'in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col. 2:3) may be appreciated by (former) Manichaeans in particular.²⁸

xxv. *Conf.* 11,39 (CCL 27,214): *Sed quoniam melior est misericordia tua super uitas, ecce distentio est uita mea, et me suscepit dextera tua in domino meo, mediatore filio hominis inter te unum et nos multos ...*

Transl.: But 'because Your mercy is more than lives' (Ps. 62:4), see how my life is but a distraction, and *Your Right Hand* upheld me (Ps. 17:36; 62:9) in the person of my Lord, the son of man who is mediator between You, the One, and us, the many (1 Tim. 2:5) ...

Comm.: The Plotinian (but also Manichaean)²⁹ language of *distentio* is surrounded by quotations from the Psalms, including a final one on 'God's Right Hand', which denotes—without a doubt—Christ.

xxvi. *Conf.* 13,1 (CCL 27, 242): *... et praeuenisti omnia bona merita mea, et retribueris manibus tuis, quibus me fecisti ...*

Transl.: ... and You have anticipated all my good merits, rewarding the work of *Your Hands* by which You made me (Ps. 118:73) ...

Comm.: As already seen above (n. 3), according to *en. in Ps.* 118, s. 18,1, it may be accepted that the image of God's Hands refers both to Christ and the Spirit. However, it is imperative to see that, in terms of God's act of creation, it is Christ who is in view: *'Liberum est igitur quomodo intellegantur manus Dei: dum tamen nec ea quae facit manibus, Verbo facere negetur'*.

xxvii. *Conf.* 13,20 (CCL 27,253): *Quoniam tuum est et mare, et tu fecisti illud, et aridam terram manus tuae formauerunt.*

28 For Augustine's knowledge of Manichaean references to Col., see e.g. c. *Adim.* 1. Cf. J.A. van den Berg, *Biblical Argument in Manichaean Missionary Practice. The Case of Adimantus and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2010, e.g. 63 and 133ff. For the Manichaean Secundinus' rather frequent references to Col., see my '*Secundini Manichaei Epistula: Roman Manichaean Biblical Argument in the Age of Augustine*' [final version *Mani and Augustine* (n. 11), ch. 20].

29 Cf. e.g. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, 2 (n. 12), 330–331.

Transl.: For also the sea is Yours and You made it, and the dry land *Your Hands* have formed (Ps. 94:5).

Comm.: Yet again on God's Hands in His work of creation. Augustine's identification of God's Hands which formed the dry land with Christus Verbum is explicit in *Gn. litt.* 6,12: '*Certe enim caelum uerbo fecit, quia dixit et factum est; scriptum est tamen: et opera manuum sunt caeli* [Ps. 101:26]. *Et de hoc imo quasi fundo mundi scriptum est: quoniam ipsius est mare, et ipse fecit illud, et aridam terram manus eius finxerunt* [Ps. 94:5]'.³⁰

2 Summary and Preliminary Conclusion

From the above overview we see that, in his *Confessions*, Augustine speaks ten times of God's *dextera* (6,26; 8,2; 9,1; 9,9; 9,35; 10,44; 10,66; 10,69; 11,4; 11,39, to which might be added 10,5 as the eleventh instance). Although it does not become evident from the first instances, while also in a number of cases *dextera Dei* refers to the place at God's right side, in 11,39 (but see already 11,4: *Iesum Christum filium tuum, uirum dexterae tuae*) Augustine most explicitly states that he understands God's Right Hand to be Christ. It is difficult to suppose that a top rhetor such as Augustine, who moreover addresses a reading public which as a rule is very well acquainted with rhetorical devices, uses a metaphor purporting a different meaning at different times. There seems to be good reason to suppose that in most or even in (nearly) all cases in his *Confessions* in which he speaks of 'God's Right Hand', he means Christ.

We may discover the same denotation in his reference to *manus tua*. Augustine uses this expression, either literally or in an equivalent sense (e.g. *lenem manum; manus mitissima et misericordiae; manu ualidissima et misericordissima*), as well as ten times in his *conf.*, i.e., in 1,24; 2,3; 3,19; 5,1; 5,13; 6,7; 6,13; 7,12; 7,27 and 10,42. Rereading all these passages from the perspective that God's *dextera* often seems to denote Christ, the same can be said of *manus tua*. This means, for instance, that 'Your Hand' in 3,19 (*Misisti manum tuam ex alto: 'You put forth Your Hand from above'*) is a metaphor of Christ.

The three instances in which Augustine only speaks of 'Hand' (6,21; 6,24; 7,21) can possibly be read from the same perspective, namely that the 'Hand' [sc. of God] denotes Christ. Perhaps this even applies to those four passages (5,13; 6,6; 13,1; 13,20) in which Augustine uses the plural 'Hands': as it has become evident from the just mentioned passages, and from remarks of Augustine made elsewhere,³⁰ he understands God's Hands (*manus*, pl.) as essentially denoting Christ.

³⁰ As one may expect, the metaphor is also present in other writings of Augustine. See,

The main results of our overview of the texts may be summarized as follows:

- in his *Confessions*, Augustine frequently speaks of God's '(Right) Hand' in an emphatic way;
- in many of these cases,³¹ God's '(Right) Hand' turns out to a metaphor for Christ;
- again and again, God's '(Right) Hand' is characterized by its rescuing,³² protecting³³ and healing³⁴ function.

All this strikingly coincides with the Manichaeian parlance of Christ as God's (Right) Hand. However, the metaphor not only occurs in Augustine and in Manichaeism, but also has its place in the writings of some of Augustine's predecessors. A few brief remarks on this phenomenon are in order.

3 Notes on God's Hand in the Pre-Augustinian Tradition

In searching the writings of Augustine's predecessors in the mainstream Christian tradition, one finds the first clear use of the metaphor in Irenaeus.³⁵ I

e.g., his *en. in Ps.* 108,29 ('Et sciant quoniam manus tua haec, et tu, Domine, fecisti eam [Ps. 108:27]? *Intelligamus itaque manum Dei esse Christum; unde alibi dicitur: Et brachium Domini cui reuelatum est [Isa. 53:1]? Haec manus et erat, et fecit eam, quia in principio erat Verbum, et Verbum caro factum est [Ioh. 1:1.14] ...*'), *adu. Iud.* 7: 'et perforce eam quam plantauit dextera tua et super filium hominis, quem confirmasti tibi [Ps. 79:16]. ... *Non enim Christus aliam plantauit ... Fiat manus tua super uirum dexterarum tuarum, et super filium hominis, quem confirmasti tibi [Ps. 79:18]. Per hunc filium hominis, id est Christum Iesum ...*'; c. s. *Arrian.* 19, with reference to Isa. 48:12–16; s. 20,1: '*dei medicinalem dexteram*'; etc. See also n. 1 above.

31 The passage from *conf.* 10,5 (text xix above) may only be included when it is a direct stab at the Manichaeans' concept of God's Right Hand.

32 *Conf.* 1,24: *eruisti, eruas*; 3,19: *eruisti*; 6,13: *eruisti*; 8,2: *suscepit*; 11,39: *suscepit*; cf. 6,26: *raptura*; 9,1: *respiciens*; 10,44: *inuoco*; 10,66: *inuocaui*. On the interchange of *eruere* with *eripere* in the Latin Bible MSS, Knauer, *Psalmenzitate*, 64 n. 1 remarks: 'α [= Veronensis, s. VI–VII] hat statt "eripio" fast immer "eruo": Ps. 6,5. 16,13. 17,44. 24,20 usw. ...', which turns out to have become the predominant verb used in the MSS of Augustine's *conf.* Curiously, the Latin Manichaeian texts (cf. 'Manichaeian Imagery' [n. 11], sections 2.1.1–2) always have the verb *eripere*.

33 In the just mentioned texts speaking of *eruere* or *suscipere*, the rescuing and protecting function partly overlap. Protection may be especially heard in 5,13 (*procuratio*, cf. n. 10) and in 10,44: *inuoco dexteram tuam* (sc. to protect against temptations).

34 *Conf.* 7,12: *mediciniae tuae ... sanabatur*; 10,42: *sanare*; 10,66: *ad salutem meam*; 10,69: *sanabis omnes languores ... idem languores ... medicina tua*; cf. 5,13: *reficientem*; 8,2: *conualescerem*.

35 On Irenaeus and Augustine, the best study still is B. Altaner, 'Augustinus und Irenaeus' (1949), in Altaner, *Kleine patristische Schriften* (hrsg. von G. Glockmann), Berlin: Aka-

already mentioned his *haer.* 5,28,4, where he speaks of Christ and the Holy Spirit as the two Hands of God.³⁶ Several other texts of Irenaeus, most of which occur in his *Haereses* and one in his *Demonstratio*, state the same.³⁷ Sometimes he speaks of only one Hand, which at least in one case (and for several OT instances!) is identified as the Son of God.³⁸ More or less clear identifications occur already in Justin Martyr³⁹ as well as, for instance, in Tertullian, Hippolytus, Cyprian, Athanasius, Cyrill of Alexandria, and Gregory of Nyssa.⁴⁰ While one could expect the identification of God's (Right) Hand with Christ to have been a leading motif of early Christian theology and biblical interpretation, as far as I can see⁴¹ the testimonies are relatively scarce and less manifest than one might suppose.

An evident exception, however, turns out to be Ambrose, in whose writings the metaphor abounds. Following the sequence of his works as presented in

demie-Verlag 1967, 194–203, who concludes that in several cases Augustine was influenced by the bishop of Lyon. Cf. e.g. G.J.M. Bartelink, 'Die Beeinflussung Augustins durch die griechischen Patres', in: J. den Boeft & J. van Oort (éd.), *Augustiniana Traiectina. Communiqués présentées au Colloque International d'Utrecht, 13–14 novembre 1986*, Paris: Études Augustiniennes 1987, 14.

36 See n. 1.

37 See the fine summary in J. Lebreton, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité*, 11, Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne 1928, 579–581 (overview of texts 579–580 n. 1, with reference to J.A. Robinson, *St. Irenaeus, The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, translated from the Armenian*, London, SPCK & New York: Macmillan 1920, 51–53) and, for a more elaborated study: J. Mambrino, 'Les Deux Mains de Dieu' dans l'œuvre de saint Irénée', *NRTh* 79 (1957) 355–370.

38 *Haer.* 5,5,2 (sc 153, 66–68): 'Quae igitur illis [cf. e.g. the three young men of Dan. 3] *adfuit manus Dei et inopinata et impossibilia naturae hominum in eis perficiens, quid mirum si in his qui translati sunt effecit aliquid inopinatum, deserviens voluntati Patris? Hic autem est Filius Dei ...*'.

39 Justin, *Dial.* 49,8 (quoting Ex. 17:16 LXX, see e.g. E.J. Goodspeed, ed., *Die ältesten Apologeten. Texte mit kurzen Einleitungen*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1914, 149); cf. Mambrino, 'Deux Mains', 356, who translates: 'La main secrète est la puissance cachée du Verbe en Jésus'.

40 Tert., *adv. Herm.* 45,2 (CCL 1,434; SC 439,198 with commentary by F. Chapot on pp. 428–429); Hipp., *Dan.* 2,33,2 (GCS Hippol. 1,107); Cypr., *ad Quir.* 2,4 (CCL 3,22); Ath., *decr. Nic. Syn.* 7,4 (cf. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1961, 1521 n. 1: 'theol. of Logos or Son as hand of God', who here and also sub 12 mentions some other instances); Cyr. Alex., in Ps. 97 (PG 69,1253 BC); Gr. Nyss., *vit. Moys.* 2 (7,1,41 f. Jaeger/Musorillo) re Ex. 4:6. Cf. e.g. K. Groß, *Menschenhand und Gotteshand in Antike und Christentum*, Stuttgart: Hiersemann 1985, 431–432 and 446.

41 Curiously, there is still no in-depth study of the theme. The usually thorough *RAC* and its 'Nachträge' in *JbAC* do not contain a separate lemma on the theme of Christ as (God's) Hand (although such a one was promised in the lemma on 'Christusepitheta', *RAC* 3, 1957, 26, whereas sub 'Hand 1', *RAC*, 13, 1986, 402 it runs: 's. die Nachträge'). Lemmata such as 'Finger' (*RAC* 7, 1969, 909–946), 'Jesus, II–III' (*RAC* 17, 1996, 821–837; 837–878) or 'Dextrarum

Brepols' *Library of Latin Texts*,⁴² one first encounters the identification of Christ with God's Right Hand in Ambrose's *Exameron*⁴³ and *De Isaac uel anima*.⁴⁴ We find the same identification in his *Explanatio Psalmorum XII*,⁴⁵ and also several times in his *Expositio Psalmi CXVIII*. In the last mentioned exposition the author not only depicts Christ as God's *dextera*,⁴⁶ but also identifies God's Hand with the Hand of the Son and, with reference to *Cant.* 2:6, repeatedly speaks of Christ's own *dextera* and *laeva*.⁴⁷ One may suppose that this interpretation has

unctio' (*RAC* 3, 1957, 881–888) are of little help. A very extensive treatment of the subject of God's Hand has, however, been provided by Karl Groß in his just mentioned book *Menschenhand und Gotteshand*. My sincere thanks to Prof. Dr. Georg Schöllgen, Director of the Franz Joseph Dölger-Institut at Bonn and editor-in-chief of the *RAC*, for his reference (email 9-8-2017) to the 537 paged book of Groß, who originally was commissioned to write the lemmata 'Hand' and 'Handauflegung' (cf. 'Vorwort' by Wolfgang Speyer to Groß' book, p. VII). Yet even Groß only deals with the metaphor of Christ as God's (Right) Hand in passing.

42 See <http://www.brepolis.net>.

43 *Exam.* 2,1,3 (*CSEL* 32,43) '*unde et ipse [sc. Moses] ait: dextera manus tua, domine, glorificata est in uirtute, dextera manus tua, domine, confregit inimicos [= Ex. 15:6]*' (from the wider context as well as Ambrose's explanations elsewhere—see the next one and further below—it is evident that, according to him, Christ is God's Right Hand); 6,9,69 (*CSEL* 32,257): '*... manus ... cuius uocabulo non dedignatus est se dei filius declarare dicente David: dextera domini fecit uirtutem, dextera domini exaltauit me [= Ps. 117:16]*'. Etc.

44 *Isaac* 8,75 (*CSEL* 32,694): '*Christus ... ipse dextera, per quem patri deo nostrum sacrificium deferamus*'.

45 See *expl. Ps. XII*, *expl. Ps. 43*,12 (*CSEL* 64,270): '*sed dextera dei credat se esse protectum dicens: dextera domini fecit uirtutem, dextera domini exaltauit me [= Ps. 117:16] ... in quibus omnibus Christus est protector, dextera, defensor et gladius*' and *expl. Ps. 47*,18 (*CSEL* 64,357–358).

46 E.g. *Exp. Ps. 118*,11,4 (*CSEL* 62,235): '*sitiuit in te anima mea subiecit infra: adhaesit post te anima mea, me suscepit dextera tua [Ps. 62,2; 62:9]. (...) suscipiens ergo dextera [tua] animam meam et de sua uirtute mihi inperitens facit eam esse quod non erat, ut dicat: uiuo autem iam non ego, uiuit autem in me Christus [Gal. 2:20]*'; *Exp. Ps. 118*,22,22 (*CSEL* 62,499): '*Sequitur uersus quintus: fiat manus tua saluum facere me, quoniam mandata tua elegi [Ps. 118:173]. aduentum domini uidetur orare, quia manus dei Christus est. ipsum legimus dexteram dei, de quo supra ait: dextera domini fecit uirtutem, dextera domini exaltauit me [Ps. 117:16]*'.

47 E.g. *Exp. Ps. 118*,14,29–31 (*CSEL* 62,318–319): '[29] *Sed quis iudicia dei doceri potest nisi qui animam suam intenderit semper ad dominum, qui potest dicere: anima mea in manibus tuis semper, et legem tuam non sum oblitus [Ps. 118:109]? ... [30] Scit propheta, scit ubi animae suae praesidium locet, unde opem speret. in manibus dei constituere uult animam suam, quia cor regis in manu dei [Prov. 21:1]. ... nec quisquam rapit eam de manu patris omnipotentis aut filii. manus enim dei, quae solidauit caelum, quos tenuerit non amittit. [31] Quae sint igitur istae manus, consideremus. in Canticis habes: laeua eius sub caput meum et dextera eius conplectetur me [Cant. 2:6]. hoc loquitur*

been influenced by Origen's exegesis, according to which the Left Hand is seen as referring to the temporal benefits of richness and honour brought about by Christ, while the Right Hand is described as providing the eternal reward of 'length of life'.⁴⁸ In Ambrose's *Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam*, the metaphor of Christ as *dextera Dei* is also clearly present,⁴⁹ as well as in his *De officiis*⁵⁰ and, for instance, *De spiritu sancto*.⁵¹

There seems to be clear evidence that Augustine, during his time in Milan in 387, heard sermons of Ambrose on the Gospel of Luke which, moreover, not infrequently targeted the Manichaeans.⁵² The same goes for the Exameron sermons, which even appear to date from the Holy Week of 386, i.e., the time of Augustine's baptism and its preceding instruction.⁵³ As regards Ambrose's *De spiritu sancto* and his explanations of the Psalms (respectively dating from before and shortly after Augustine's arrival in Milan),⁵⁴ one can safely assume

sponsa de Christo, anima de uerbo dei; Christus autem idem est uerbum dei atque sapientia [cf. 1 Cor. 1:24]. *beata ergo anima quam complectitur sapientia. magna est sapientiae manus, magna dextera totam complectitur animam*. Etc. Cf. e.g. *Exp. Ps.* 118,22,22 (CSEL 62,499–500).

48 Cf. e.g. Origenes, *Cant.* 3,9,1–8 (sec. transl. Rufini) (sc 376, 582–586): '... quae sit Verbi Dei laeva, quae sit dextera ... Ipsa est enim sponsi dextera et laeva, quae in Proverbiis de sapientia dicitur, ubi ait: Longitudo enim vitae in dextera eius, in sinistra vero eius divitiae et gloria [Prov. 3:16]. ... Illa pars Verbi Dei quae ante assumptionem carnis in dispensationibus peracta est dextera potest videri, haec vero, quae per incarnationem sinistra appellari. Unde et in sinistra divitias et gloriam habere dicitur; per incarnationem namque divitias et gloriam quaesivit, omnium scilicet gentium salutem. In dextera autem longitudo vitae esse dicitur, per quod sine dubio illa eius, qua in principio apud Deum Deus erat Verbum [Ioh. 1:], sempiternitas indicatur'. Cf. e.g. Origenes, *Der Kommentar zum Hohelied*. Eingeleitet und übersetzt von Alfons Fürst und Holger Strutwolf, Berlin-Boston: De Gruyter/Freiburg-Basel-Wien: Herder 2016, 338–340. Cf. Ambrose, *Exp. Ps.* 118,14,31 (CSEL 62,319): '... in dextera eius longitudo uitae est, in sinistra autem diuitiae et gloria' and *ibidem* 33 (CSEL 62,320).

49 *Exp. Luc.* VII, 92 (CCL 14,245): '... cum Christus dei dextera sit ...; cum dextera dei dicat: ego et pater unum sumus [Ioh. 10:30]'.

50 *De off.* 3,15,95 (CCL 15,189) with reference to Ex. 4:6f.: 'Merito manum misit quia dextera Dei Christus est ...'.

51 *De spir.s.* 2,7,69 (CSEL 79,114): 'Ideo igitur et filius patris dextera nuncupatur, sicut lectum est [sc. Ps. 117:16] ...'; 3,3,11 (CSEL 79,155): 'Nam sicut filium dei scriptura dexteram dei dixit, sicut lectum est: Dextera tua, domine, glorificata est in uirtute, dextera manus tua, domine, confregit inimicos [Ex. 15:6] ...'; 3,4,17 (CSEL 79,158): '... filio dei, quia dextera dei dicitur'; 3,4,18 (CSEL 79,158): 'Sed filius et dextera et uirtus dicitur'; 3,4,20 (CSEL 79,159): 'Habes quia et filium sit confessus et patrem [sc. in Ex. 15:6], cuius est dextera'.

52 See e.g. Courcelle, *Recherches*, 97–98.

53 Courcelle, *Recherches*, 98–102.

54 Courcelle, *Recherches*, 98 n. 4. Cf. M. Petschenig, 'Praefatio', CSEL 62, VI, who dates the *Expositio Psalmi CXVIII* to 386–388 and the *Explanatio Psalmorum XII* to 388–397.

Augustine's familiarity with them, as with so many of Ambrose's other works.⁵⁵ With Antoon Bastiaensen one may conclude: 'l'influence d'Ambroise a été décisive et permanente'.⁵⁶

4 Conclusion

The specific place of the metaphor of Christ as God's '(Right) Hand', both in Augustine's *Confessions* as well as in Manichaeism and a predecessor like Ambrose, gives rise to the following conclusions. The first one is that, by emphatically using a well-known metaphor, Augustine is able to address his Christian 'brothers' who appear to have been his first readers.⁵⁷ Many of them will have been acquainted with Ambrose's writings, or even belonged to his Milanese circle. The second one is that Manichaeism seems to have primed Augustine to gravitate to the image of the Right Hand. Via this metaphor he was able to subtly appeal to the Manichaeans.⁵⁸ It may be recalled that Augustine creates a strong impression of having already obtained a thorough knowledge of their writings after becoming a Manichaean *auditor*.⁵⁹ As we have seen, in their texts—and maybe their art—the figure of Christ as God's Right Hand had a prominent place. By employing this metaphor, the 'protreptic-paraeNETic purpose'⁶⁰ of the *Confessions* with regard to the Manichaeans excellently comes to the fore. In the preceding study on the imagery of God's Hand in the Manichaean texts, I also indicated that the Roman Manichaean Secundinus already stressed the central role of Christ as 'the Right Hand of the truth'. From his letter to Augustine, we know how much he was incited to address his former co-religionist after reading his *Confessions*.⁶¹

An essential aspect of Augustine's *Confessions* may be read in a new way. In light of the previous analyses one could also infer, as a likely probability, that it

55 See e.g. A. Bastiaensen, 'Augustin et ses prédécesseurs latins chrétiens', in den Boeft & van Oort (éd.), *Augustiniana Traiectina* (n. 35), 30–34.

56 Bastiaensen, 'Augustin et ses prédécesseurs', 34.

57 For those Christian (i.e., Catholic) '*fratres*', see e.g. *conf.* 10,4–5 and *retr.* 2,6.

58 They are even directly addressed in *conf.* 9,9, while in the context (see text xvii above) Augustine speaks of God's *dextera*.

59 Cf. e.g. J. van Oort, 'Young Augustine's Knowledge of Manichaeism. An Analysis of the *Confessiones* and Some Other Relevant Texts', VC 62 (2008) 441–466 [final version *Mani and Augustine* (n. 11), ch. 15].

60 See e.g. A. Kotzé, *Augustine's Confessions. Communicative Purpose and Audience*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2004.

61 E.g. Courcelle, *Recherches*, 236–238.

is not by chance that Augustine so often characterizes his *conf.* as a *sacrificium* or *hostia*.⁶² It brings to mind an imagery which may have been co-inspired and excellently understood by the Manichaeans as well.

62 E.g. *conf.* 4,1; 5,1; 8,1; 9,1; 11,3; 12,33. But also see, for instance, *conf.* 9,17: '*Accipe confessiones meas et gratiarum actiones ...*'.

Sin and Concupiscence in Augustine's *Confessions* (*conf.* 1–13)

1 Introduction

*What is the subject of Augustine's *Confessions*? Many would say it is the famous story of a saint who confesses his sins to God. The reader perceives how the godly man once committed many offenses in which sexual concupiscence played a pivotal role. After all, does not the book tell the life story of the man who once prayed: 'Grant me chastity and continence, but not yet' (*conf.* 8,17)?

In the past decades, innumerable studies have shown that Augustine's *Confessions* deals with many more subjects and is aimed at a variety of different readers. But all the deeper insights into the ingeniousness of this literary masterpiece do not obliterate the fact that, indeed, much in it concerns sex and sin.

The present chapter seeks to uncover this aspect anew. It will discuss how Augustine conceived of the sins of his youth and even earliest days; it will show how sex and sin were determinative in his illustrious conversion story; it also focuses on the reflections on his sinful state at the time when he wrote the work. After these and other main aspects have been discussed—for the sake of convenience we follow the sequence of the *Confessions*—we will seek to fathom what, exactly, concupiscence and sin meant to Augustine.

2 Sin and Concupiscence in Augustine's Early Years

Modern readers are often struck by the following passages in the first book of the *Confessions*:

* First published as 'Sin and Concupiscence in Augustine's *Confessions*: An Analytical Overview of the Relevant Texts and Some Conclusions', *Augustiniana* 68 (2018) 193–207, brief version 'Sin and Concupiscence' in T. Toom (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine's 'Confessions'*, Cambridge: CUP 2020, 92–106, adapted and amended also in *Mani and Augustine*, Leiden-Boston 2020, 307–321.

Quis me commemorat peccatum infantiae meae, quoniam nemo mundus a peccato coram te, nec infans, cuius est unius diei uita super terram? Quis me commemorat? An quilibet tantillus nunc paruulus, in quo uideo quod non memini de me?

conf. 1,11; *CCL* 27,6

Who reminds me of the sin of my infancy? For 'none is pure from sin before You, not even an infant of one day upon the earth' (Job 14:4–5 LXX). Who reminds me? Some little mite who is a tiny child now, in whom I see what I do not remember in myself?

Quod si et in iniquitate conceptus sum et in peccatis mater mea me in utero aluit, ubi, oro te, deus meus, ubi, domine, ego seruus tuus, ubi aut quando innocens fui?

conf. 1,12; *CCL* 27,7

If 'I was conceived in iniquity and in sins my mother nourished me in her womb' (Ps. 50:7), I ask You, my God, I ask, Lord, where and when Your servant was innocent?

These are the first statements about what Augustine later termed original sin.¹ With reference to a text from the biblical book of Job, it is first confessed that even an infant of one day is not free from sin. This sin, so we may infer from Augustine's thinking during the time he authored the *Confessions*, is inherited through the child's generative descent from Adam. The same is expressed in the second statement, with reference to Psalm 50:7.

The two passages are indicative of the negative tone which pervades the beginning of the *Confessions*. If already an infant (a child unable to speak, *in-fans*) is not without sin, how much more will this apply to an older child! No wonder that Augustine, after his *infantia*, describes his *pueritia* with even darker colours. He goes so far as to summarize his boyhood period as follows: '*tantillus puer et tantus peccator*: so little a boy and so great a sinner!' (*conf.*

1 On the subject, see e.g. A. Sage, 'Péché originel. Naissance d'un dogme', *REA* 13 (1967) 211–248 and *idem*, 'Le péché originel dans la pensée de saint Augustin de 412 à 430', *REA* 15 (1969) 75–112. Sage stresses the development of Augustine's thinking which reaches full maturity in the anti-Pelagian works. P. Rigby (*Original Sin in Augustine's Confessions*, Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press 1987), mainly based on Books 1 and 8, seems to conclude otherwise and discerns a full doctrine of original sin already present in the *conf.* As far as I can see, Sage's conclusion is still the most acceptable one. For latest studies on 'original sin', see e.g. M. Lamberigts, 'Peccatum originale', *AL* 4, Fasc. 3/4, Basel: Schwabe 2014, 599–615 (with extensive bibliography).

1,19). Looking for the sins he has in view, one finds them described in particular at the end of book 1. They consist of ‘countless lies with which I deceived the slave who took me to school and my teachers and my parents, and all because of my love for play (*amor ludendi*), my passion for frivolous spectacles (*studium spectandi nugatoria*), and my restless urge to imitate comic scenes (*imitandi ludrica inquietudo*)’ (*conf.* 1,30). Moreover, so Augustine recalls, ‘I also used to steal from the cellar of my parents and from their table either out of gluttony (*gula imperitante*) or to have something to give to other boys who, certainly, enjoyed our play as much as I did, and who would sell me their playthings in return. Even in this game I often lay in wait to dominate by fraudulent victories, because I was myself dominated by a vain desire (*cupiditas*) to win’ (*ibidem*).

Commentators have often seen this last passage as an anticipation of the famous pear-theft.² It has also been detected that Augustine’s tripartite arrangement of sins in accordance with 1John 2:16 (the concupiscence of the flesh; the concupiscence of the eyes; the worldly ambition, a division of sins which becomes best visible in his reflection in *conf.* 10,41), already forms the background of the description of his boyhood errors. The concupiscence of the flesh presents itself in his youthful demands of gluttony, the concupiscence of the eyes in his passion for frivolous spectacles, and the worldly ambition in his vain desire to win. In actual fact, we may already see the same tripartite pattern in the brief indications of his early sins in *conf.* 1,16: his love of games (*amor ludendi*) reflects the concupiscence of the flesh; his curiosity (*curiositas*) with regard to the public shows is caused by the concupiscence of the eyes; his pride of winning (*superbae uictoriae*) is constituted by the pride of this world.³

Another element in Book 1 is also indicative of the whole work. Already in *conf.* 1,28 one finds Augustine’s identification with the younger son of Luke 15.⁴ The prodigal son went to live in a distant country, and ‘to live there in lustful passion is to live in darkness and to be far from Your face’. The lustful passion (*affectus libidinosus*) is also mentioned here as the dark passion (*affectus tenebrosus*). This *affectus* is nothing but the sexual libido, which arose in humankind as a punishment for Adam’s sin.⁵

2 E.g. L.C. Ferrari, ‘The Pear-Theft in Augustine’s “Confessions”’, *REA* 16 (1970) 233–242. Cf. e.g. J.J. O’Donnell, *Augustine, Confessions*, 11, *Commentary on Books 1–7*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992, 100.

3 Cf. O’Donnell, *Augustine, Confessions*, 11, 65–66.

4 E.g. L.C. Ferrari, ‘The Theme of the Prodigal Son in Augustine’s *Confessions*’, *REA* 12 (1977) 105–118, esp. 112.

5 See e.g. *DCD* 14,21: ‘post peccatum quippe orta est [sc. libido]’. Cf. e.g. A. Zumkeller, ‘Affectus

3 Sin and Concupiscence in Augustine's Early Adolescence

If Augustine considers his baby- and boyhood to be so filled with sin, how much more does this apply to his adolescence! The reader of Book 2 is introduced to this harsh truth by the very first sentence:

Recordari uolo transactas foeditates meas et carnales corruptiones animae meae ...

conf. 2,1; *CCL* 27,18

I want to call to mind the foolish deeds I committed and the carnal corruptions of my soul ...

What did these deeds of sin consist in? Augustine first indicates them briefly as 'various and shadowy love affairs' (*conf.* 2,1). They comprise the passions of the sixteenth year of his life when, having completed school in Madauros, he spent a year in idleness at home. By then, 'the clouds from the mud of carnal concupiscence (*concupiscentia carnis*)' obscured his heart (*conf.* 2,2), and 'the frenzy of lust (*uesania libidinis*)' (*conf.* 2,4) and 'the thornbushes of lust (*uepres libidinum*)' arose above his head (*conf.* 2,6). All this becomes evident through Monnica's strict warning that he should not fall into fornication and, above all, should not commit adultery with any man's wife (*conf.* 2,7). The adolescent Augustine, however, throws her admonitions to the wind and, seeking to impress his comrades, even pretends (*fingebam*) to have done things he had not done (*ibidem*). In all of this, he now considers himself to have wandered through the streets of Babylon,⁶ while everywhere there was a dark fog (*caligo*) that cut him off from the brightness of God's truth (*conf.* 2,8). From the beginning of the book, the reader may gather what this 'dark fog' was: nothing other than the darkness of sexual lust (*conf.* 2,2: *caligo libidinis*).

The next part of Book 2 (9–18) deals with the famous pear theft. Much ink has been spent on this story and its interpretation, and one of the insights gained from these many studies is that Augustine's lengthy reflection on his

(passio, perturbatio)', *AL* 1, Fasc. 1, Basel-Stuttgart: Schwabe 1986, 176: 'A. glaubt, daß die geschlechtliche 'libido' erst eine Strafe der Sünde ist (...). Deshalb charakterisiert er diesen 'affectus libidinosus' auch als 'affectus tenebrosus', weil er von Gott wegführe (*conf.* 1,28) ...'—That this *libido* is sexual lust is clearly evident from 1,26 (Terentius' words stimulating sexual lust) and from another remark earlier in 1,28, referring to the lusts (*libidines*) described in the works of the grammarians.

6 On the metaphor in its context, see e.g. J. van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon. A Study of Augustine's City of God and the Sources of his Doctrine of the Two Cities*, Leiden et alib.: E.J. Brill 1991 (repr. Leiden-Boston: Brill 2013), 119.

deed seems to be especially aimed at his (former or actual) Manichaean readers.⁷ Indeed, it is curious that his adolescent life of sin finds its fullest expression in this episode, although in his reflection Augustine repeatedly stresses that *alone* he would never have committed the crime (*conf.* 2,16–17). Sensual pleasure (*uoluptas*) and desire (*cupiditas*) stand in the background as causes for his evil doing (*conf.* 2,16). One may read the story as a metaphor for sexual sin.

4 Sin and Concupiscence in Augustine's Later Adolescence

The following books, until Book 7, deal with the later years of Augustine's adolescence. When he came to study at Carthage, a 'cauldron of scandalous loves' (*sartago flagitiosorum amorum*) hissed all around him (*conf.* 3,1). What does Augustine mean with 'scandalous loves'? He described them as 'sweet to love and to be loved, the more so if I could also enjoy the body of the beloved', and he adds: 'I therefore polluted the vein of friendship (*uena amicitiae*) with the dirt of concupiscence (*sordes concupiscentiae*), and I clouded its purity by the hell of lust (*tartarus libidinis*)' (*ibidem*).

Augustine is dealing here with concupiscence and lust in the context of his *friendship* relations, i.e., friendships with male adolescents. The above quotations may best be read as indications of homoerotic relationships, and the same probably goes for his remark that God 'besprinkled that sweetness with much vinegar' and that he was 'flogged with the glowing iron rods of jealousy, suspicion, fear, anger, and quarrels' (*conf.* 3,1). Latent or actual homoerotic feelings may also be assumed behind Augustine's remark that he even dared to pursue his desires (*concupiscere*)⁸ in the church during the service and that he was 'struck with severe punishments' (*conf.* 3,5).⁹ But Augustine leaves no misun-

7 Ferrari, 'Pear-Theft' (n. 2); J.D. BeDuhn, *Augustine's Manichaean Dilemma*, 1, *Conversion and Apostasy*, 373–388 C.E., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 2010, 38–41.

8 Curiously, H. Chadwick (*Saint Augustine, Confessions*, OUP: Oxford 1991, 37) translates 'concupiscere' with 'lust after a girl', but the latter is simply made up.

9 S. Dolbeau 2,5 speaks of mixed vigils in Carthage in which Augustine was present: 'Ego puer uigilans cum studerem in hac ciuitate, sic uigilaui feminis permixtis improbitatibus masculorum, ubi forte et castitatem temptabat occasio. Quam nunc honeste uigilatur, quam caste, quam sancte!'. See e.g. *Augustin d'Hippone, Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique*. Retrouvés à Mayence, édités et commentés par François Dolbeau, Paris 1996, 330. But in the 'ordinary' services the women and men were always strictly separated, in the time of Bishop Aurelius even through separate entrances; cf. e.g. Dolbeau, *Augustin d'Hippone, Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique*, 320 n. 21 and 633. The very sharp words in *conf.* 3,5 (cf. also 'fructus mortis'; 'a terribilibus nocentibus') should therefore not be interpreted as referring to adolescent love between the sexes.

derstandings about his current judgement: 'Therefore shameful acts (*flagitia*) which are contrary to nature, such as the acts of the Sodomites, are everywhere and always to be detested and punished. (...) The fellowship (*societas*) which should exist between God and us is violated when the nature of which He is the author is polluted by the perversity of lust (*libido*)' (*conf.* 3,15). The notion that Augustine in all these instances in Book 3 has homoeroticism in view, seems to be corroborated by his account in Book 4 of how he once loved a 'very dear' Thagastian friend in a friendship 'sweet to me beyond all the [other] sweetnesses of life I had experienced' (*conf.* 4,7). He compares it to the friendship between Orestes and Pylades (*conf.* 4,11), which is often taken as the archetype of the homoerotic pair.

But all these likely homoerotic affairs were only transient. Although Augustine recalls, at the beginning of Book 4, that—because of the liberal arts—he was concerned with 'the follies of the stages and the intemperance of lusts (*intemperantia libidinum*)', he also recounts that in those years he lived with one woman (*una*), whom he had tracked down by his restless passion (*uagus ardor*). This unnamed 'Una' 'was the only one (*una*) and I was faithful to her' (*conf.* 4,2).

In Book 5, we again come across a short remark about original sin (*peccatum originale*) 'by which we all die in Adam' (*conf.* 5,16, quoting 1 Cor. 15:22). Book 6 tells how Augustine, by then the official state rhetorician in Milan, feels himself 'dragging along, under the goads of the desires (*sub stimulis cupiditatum*)' (*conf.* 6,9). Book 6 also contains a brief sketch of the life of Alypius: his integrity is stressed, but also his former lust (*uoluptas*) for the circus (*conf.* 6,12) and the pleasures (*uoluptates*) of the gladiatorial games (*conf.* 6,13). As regards Augustine himself, he sees his former years as well as his present life in Milan full of 'vain desires' (*uanae cupiditates*) (*conf.* 6,18). Later in Book 6, he describes himself as 'bound by the disease of the flesh (*morbus carnis*) and its death-bringing sweetness (*mortifera suauitas*)' (*conf.* 6,21). From the context we may be sure that this fleshly disease, also described as 'the glue of that pleasure (*uisum illius uoluptatis*)' (*conf.* 6,22), is nothing else than his addiction to sex. Unlike Alypius, he is tortured by the habit of satisfying his insatiable concupiscence (*insatiabilis concupiscentia*) (*ibidem*). After he has dismissed his 'Una', and because his new fiancée is not marriageable, he takes an interim concubine because he is 'a slave of lust (*libidinis seruus*)' (*conf.* 6,25). In retrospect he sees the time of his transition from adolescence to early manhood as the time when he was absorbed in 'an abyss of carnal lusts (*uoluptatum carnalium gurgis*)' while living 'in perpetual bodily prurience (*in perpetua corporis uoluptate*)' and 'an overflow of carnal lusts (*affluentia carnalium uoluptatum*)' (*conf.* 6,26).

5 Sin and Concupiscence in Augustine's Early Manhood and the Time of His Conversion in Milan

In Book 7, Augustine begins the narration of his early manhood (*iuuentus*). His first words on this period are by no means flattering:

Iam mortua erat adulescentia mea mala et nefanda, et ibam in iuuentutem, quanta aetate maior, tanto uanitate turpior ...

conf. 7,1; *CCL* 27,92

By now, my evil and wicked adolescence was deceased, and I was entering the period of early manhood. But as I advanced in years, the more shameful I became in vanity ...

His most important intellectual problem is the question of how to think about God and, related to this difficulty, the immense issue of the origin of evil. According to Augustine, the cause of sin is men's free choice of the will (*conf.* 7,5). At this time, in the thirty-first year of his life, he experiences that he is drawn towards God because of God's beauty but dragged away from God by his own weight; 'and this weight was my carnal habit: *et pondus hoc consuetudo carnalis*' (*conf.* 7,23). In other words, it was his sexual habit that kept him away from God. From his reading of the apostle Paul, he learns about 'the law of sins, which is in his members' and also that only Christ 'will free him from this body of death' (Rom. 7:23–25) (*conf.* 7,27).

Book 8 deals with the most memorable period of Augustine's life, the time of his conversion in Milan. By then, he is in his thirty-second year.¹⁰ 'Still in tight bondage to a woman', he feels himself constrained to the conjugal life (*conf.* 8,2). He is very negative about sexual lust. In his opinion, the perverted will causes the *libido*; when this *libido* is served, it becomes a habit; and when this habit is not resisted, it becomes a necessity (*conf.* 8,10). From his own experience he now understands Paul's words that the flesh desires against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh (Gal. 5:17) (*conf.* 8,11), and that there is a law of sin in his members (Rom. 7:23) (*conf.* 8,12). The effect of the famous story told by his African compatriot Ponticianus is introduced as follows: 'I will now tell how You delivered me from the chain of my desire for copulation (*uin-*

¹⁰ There is still a remarkable confusion regarding Augustine's years. With 'his thirty-second year' I mean the 32nd year of his life, i.e., the time from Nov. 385 to Nov. 386, when he was 31.

culum ... desiderii concubitus), by which I was tightly bound, and from the slavery of worldly affairs' (*conf.* 8,13). Once—most likely when he was a Manichaean *auditor*, impressed by the Manichaean Elect's sexual abstinence—he had prayed: 'Grant me chastity and continence (*castitas et continentia*), but not yet', for he was afraid that God would hear his prayer quickly and that too rapidly he would be healed from his disease of sexual lust (*morbus concupiscentiae*) (*conf.* 8,17). Now he is almost torn apart by the inner struggle between his two wills. The bad will is not caused by an evil spirit (as the Manichaeans opine), but is the punishment caused by Adam's sin (*conf.* 8,22). To Augustine, sexual abstinence (*continentia*) is the great ideal to be pursued (e.g. *conf.* 8,27). The essential result of his conversion is described at the end of Book 8 in the following words: 'For You so converted me to You that I sought neither a wife, nor any hope of this world' (*conf.* 8,30).

After his conversion, Augustine and some of his fellows prepared themselves for baptism. First, he had to withdraw from his worldly duties, the former pursuit of which he describes in general terms as scratching the itch of lust (*scabies libidinum*) (*conf.* 9,1). He no longer has the desire (*cupiditas*) to teach (*conf.* 9,4). One of those preparing himself for baptism along with Augustine is Adeodatus, his son according to the flesh, begotten of his sin (*peccatum*): 'for I contributed nothing to that boy other than sin (*delictum*)' (*conf.* 9,14). Another hint at original sin may be found at the end of Book 9, in the statement that every soul dies in Adam (cf. 1 Cor. 15:22) (*conf.* 9,34). Earlier, in the famous Ostia conversation with his mother, both had reached the conclusion that the delight of the bodily senses (*carnealium sensuum delectatio*) can in no way be compared to eternal life (*conf.* 9,24).

6 Sin and Concupiscence in Augustine's Present State

A new phase in Augustine's speaking of concupiscence and sin is reached in Book 10. Here he discusses his present state when composing the *Confessions*. The discourse appears to be unique, for where else in antiquity and in previous Christian times does one find someone scrutinizing his inner self in such depth and detail? First comes Augustine's famed passages on memory (*conf.* 10,8–38).¹¹ After his penetrating analyses of this part of the inner self, he elaborates on other aspects of the human interior which—like memory—relate to the human senses (*conf.* 10,41–53).

¹¹ Cf. ch. 8.

In his first, lengthy exposition on sinful concupiscence, Augustine proceeds from 1John 2:16 (*conf.* 10,41). As we have seen already, this biblical text speaks of the concupiscence of the flesh (*concupiscentia carnis*), the concupiscence of the eyes (*concupiscentia oculorum*), and worldly ambition (*ambitio saeculi*). Although the second and the third lusts (the latter mainly meaning ‘worldly arrogance’) will receive extensive treatment, Augustine’s deal first and in most detail with the problem of carnal lust. Immediately after his opening quote of 1John 2:16, he remarks:

Iussisti a concubitu, et de ipso coniugio melius aliquid, quam concessisti, monuisti. Et quoniam dedisti, factum est, et antequam dispensator sacramenti tui fierem. Sed adhuc uiuunt in memoria mea, de qua multa locutus sum, talium rerum imagines, quas ibi consuetudo mea fixit, et occursantur mihi uigilanti quidem carentes uiribus, in somnis autem non solum usque ad delectationem sed etiam usque ad consensionem factumque simillimum. Et tantum ualeat imaginis inclusio in anima mea in carne mea, ut dormienti falsa uisa persuadeant quod uigilanti uera non possunt. Numquid tunc ego non sum, domine deus meus?

conf. 10,41; *CCL* 27,176

You commanded me to abstain from copulation¹² and, in regard to marriage itself, You instructed a better way of life than You have allowed (cf. 1Cor. 7:38). And because You gave it, it was done, even before I became a dispenser of Your sacrament. But in my memory of which I have spoken at length, there still live images of such things which were fixed there by my habit (*consuetudo*). They rush into my thoughts, though strengthless, when I am awake; but in sleep they do not only arouse pleasure (*delectatio*), but even obtain consent, to something closely akin to the act they represent. The illusion of the image within my soul has such a force upon my flesh that these unreal visions influence me, when sleeping, unto that which the real visions are not able when waking. Am I not myself at that time, Lord my God?

In explicit terms, bishop Augustine speaks here about his sexual dreams. In the next chapter he even more openly tells that these dreams may lead to nocturnal emissions (*usque ad carnis fluxum*: ‘up to the flow of the flesh’)—in modern parlance, these ‘flows’ may be labelled with the informal term ‘wet dreams’.

12 *Concubitus*, i.e., in this context, ‘extra-marital intercourse’.

According to Augustine, they are caused by 'the lascivious motions of his sleep (*lasciuos motus ... mei soporis*)', which in turn he sees provoked by 'the glue of lust (*concupiscentiae uiscum*)' (*conf.* 10,42).

There are also other forms of sinful concupiscence. When dealing with the temptations of the flesh in accordance with the classical five senses, after his discussion of the sense of touch (i.e., sexual pleasure), Augustine continues with considerations of the other senses. First, he reviews the lust (*uoluptas*) of eating and drinking (*conf.* 10,43). Although food and drink are necessary as 'medicines', the 'snare of concupiscence (*laqueus concupiscentiae*)' lies in wait (*conf.* 10,44). The transition from hunger to satiety is itself a pleasure (*uoluptas*). While the upkeep of one's health is the reason for eating and drinking, a 'dangerous pleasantness (*periculosa iucunditas*)' joins itself to the process and tries to take first place. In this context, Augustine warns against the deceitful pleasure-seeking desire (*uoluptaria cupiditatis fallacia*) (*conf.* 10,44). Texts on *concupiscentia* and *uoluptas* from Jesus Sirach (18:30; 23:6) are quoted to support his opinion (*conf.* 10,45). Most likely in polemic with his former Manichaean fellow believers, he remarks that it is not the uncleanness of food he fears, but that of uncontrolled desire (*immunditia cupiditatis*) (*conf.* 10,46). Although he has been able to completely cut away sexual intercourse (*concupitus*), his daily struggle against uncontrolled desire (*concupiscentia*) in eating and drinking has remained (*conf.* 10,47).

Augustine discusses the allurements of odours only briefly (*conf.* 10,48: 'With the allurements of odours I am not much concerned. When absent, I do not look for them; when present, I do not reject them. I am prepared to do without them all the time') before he comes to 'the delights of the ears (*uoluptates aurium*)' (*conf.* 10,49). May we conclude, based on his scant self-analysis regarding the sense of smell—i.e., only one full Latin sentence in the leading editions—that Augustine's olfactory organ was less developed?¹³ Or perhaps only note that he attached little value to this sense? In contrast, he seems to have had an exceptional sensitivity for sounds and music. The remark which opens his two fairly long paragraphs on the sense of hearing may refer to his adolescent years as a Manichaean: 'the pleasures of the ears had a more tenacious hold on me and

13 In his famous outburst '*Sero te amaui*: Late have I loved You' (*conf.* 10,38), Augustine also makes mention of God's fragrance, but the passage seems to be strongly influenced by Manichaean descriptions of God; cf. for instance the Coptic *Kephalaia* (ed. H.J. Polotsky, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1940), 64,13 ff. To *conf.* 10,9, one may compare the Coptic Manichaean *Psalmbook* (ed. C.R.C. Allberry, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 1938), 150,22–26. Other passages in which Augustine speaks of fragrance and smell are mostly inspired by biblical texts, although in *conf.* 10,13 he notes that he can distinguish between the smell of lilies and the smell of violets (cf. *conf.* 10,16).

held me under their spell'. Once he sang Manichaean songs and had difficulty with their metrical art (*conf.* 3,14: '*et cantabam carmina*' etc.); this past period of his life, in which the alluring psalms and hymns of the Manichaeans were so important, still seems to affect his appreciation of music. There remains a great danger for Augustine to be carried away by the sweetness of the tones without fully observing the holy words; this is 'a delight of the flesh (*delectatio carnis*)' (*conf.* 10,49). Upon some consideration, he is prepared to allow melodic singing in the church; 'yet when it happens to me that the singing moves me more than the subject of the song, I confess myself to commit a sin deserving punishment' (*poenaliter me peccare confiteor*) (*conf.* 10,50).

Concupiscential sin is also considered to be present in 'the delight (*uoluptas*) of the eyes of my flesh' (*conf.* 10,51). The sensual pleasure of sight is discussed by Augustine as the last temptation of 'the lust of the flesh (*concupiscentia carnis*)'. He prays that 'beautiful and varied forms, glowing and pleasant colours' may not hold upon his soul: God is his good, not these (*conf.* 10,51). Corporeal light (venerated by the Manichaeans) is seen in contrast with non-corporeal light; typically, the blind Tobit and a number of Old Testament patriarchs are mentioned as those who saw it (*conf.* 10,52). It is difficult not to discern anti-Manichaean polemic in the exclusive choice of only Old Testament examples (and the striking absence of any New Testament text as accepted by his former co-religionists). On account of beauty of form, it is God the creator who must be praised; He is the highest Beauty from whom the artists and admirers of beauty draw their power to appreciate it. This (Neo)Platonic way of understanding God and Beauty is accompanied by the typically Augustinian warning: be mindful of 'the (Christian, Pauline) mode of use' (*utendi modus*) (*conf.* 10,53).¹⁴

In addition to 'the concupiscence of the flesh (*concupiscentia carnis*)', 'which inheres in the delight (*delectatio*) given by the pleasures (*uoluptates*) of all the senses', there exists in the soul—through the medium of the same bodily senses—a concupiscence which does not take delight in carnal pleasure but in perceptions acquired through the flesh. According to 1 John 2:16, this is 'the concupiscence of the eyes (*concupiscentia oculorum*)'. Augustine devotes a long discussion to this form of concupiscence which he sees exemplified in the *curiositas* (*conf.* 10,54–57). Essential to human curiosity is 'a lust (*uoluptas*) for experimenting and knowing' which, however, often becomes 'a morbid craving (*morbus cupiditatis*, litt. 'a malady of desire')' (*conf.* 10,55). As such, it is a grave sin. But falling into sin also threatens 'through many most minute and con-

14 For earlier passages based upon the underlying distinction between *uti* and *frui*, see e.g. *conf.* 1,31; 4,30; 8,24.

temptible things' that arouse our curiosity: 'how often we slip, who can count?' (*conf.* 10,57).

Lastly, as the third kind of temptation, there is worldly ambition (*ambitio saeculi*). Part of it is the lust (*libido*) for self-justification, the first sinful concupiscence from which Augustine confesses he has been cured (*conf.* 10,58).

In the next three books, Augustine does not further thematize his concepts of concupiscential sin. An echo of his expositions based on 1 John 2:16 can be found near the end of his *Confessions*. In *conf.* 13,30 it sounds one last time: 'but haughtiness of pride (*fastus elationis*), the pleasure of lust (*delectatio libidinis*), and the poison of curiosity (*uenenum curiositatis*) are the passions (*motus*) of a dead soul' (*conf.* 13,30).

7 Conclusions and Final Remarks

Based on our analytical reading of the *Confessions*, the following observations may be made:

- a. In the descriptions of both his past (*conf.* 1–9) and present state (*conf.* 10), Augustine continuously stresses his sinfulness. As for his early adolescent years, he sometimes exaggerates his sins: for instance, he tells of making up stories of sexual prowess to impress his playmates; another case is the widely elaborated story of the pear theft in *conf.* 2,9–18. But a sincere and profound conviction of sinfulness pervades the entire *Confessions*. This conviction is based, on the one hand, on his (then little systematized) concept of original sin and, on the other hand, on his view of concupiscence. In all evident instances in the *Confessions* (1,11.12; 5,16; 9,34; cf. *delictum* in 9,14), original sin is the sin in which Adam's progeny is involved; it is the starting point and lasting basis of Augustine's sinful state. 'Concupiscence' is the actual state in which he lived his past life and in which he still exists.
- b. In the vocabulary of the *Confessions*, 'concupiscence' is indicated by a whole plethora of words. Among these, the noun *concupiscentia* occurs 16 times, supplemented by three instances of the verb *concupiscere*. The *concupiscentiae* mentioned in 1 John 2:16 form an important reference point for Augustine in defining *concupiscentia* (e.g. *conf.* 10,41). Also, *concupiscentia carnis* is described in a rather general way as 'the lust of the flesh which inheres in the delight given by the pleasures of *all* the senses: ... *concupiscentiam carnis, quae inest in delectatione omnium sensuum et uoluptatum*' (*conf.* 10,54). However, in most instances *concupiscentia* has an outspoken sexual meaning, or at least a strong sexual connota-

tion. This begins with Augustine's depiction of his early adolescence in which 'the clouds from the mud of carnal concupiscence (*concupiscentia carnis*)' obscured his heart (*conf.* 2,3). Also, he 'befouled the spring of friendship with the filth of concupiscence (*sordes concupiscentiae*)' (*conf.* 3,1) and even pursued his sexual desire (*concupiscit*) within the walls of the church (*conf.* 3,5). Books 6 and 8 deal with his later adolescence, but also in the narrative about these years *concupiscentia* has an outspoken sexual meaning: Augustine describes himself as fully addicted to sexual intercourse ('*consuetudo satiandae insatiabilis concupiscentiae*: my habit of satisfying an insatiable sexual desire', *conf.* 6,22) while his famous prayer '*da mihi castitatem et continentiam sed noli modo*' is spoken within the context of his fear that God would 'too rapidly heal me from the disease of concupiscence (*morbus concupiscentiae*)' (*conf.* 8,17). From the contexts in which they are quoted, one also gets the impression that, for Augustine, well-known Pauline texts such as Gal. 5:17 (*conf.* 10,33: '*caro concupiscit aduersus spiritum*'; cf. *conf.* 8,11) and Rom. 13:14 (*conf.* 8,29: '*sed induite Iesum Christum et carnis prouidentiam ne feceritis in concupiscentiis*') have an outspoken sexual ring. Up to and including the narrative of *conf.* 10,42, *concupiscentia* as 'burning desire' always denotes sexual desire.¹⁵

- c. The observations made in regard of the Christian neologism *concupiscentia* (mainly translating the Greek noun *epithymía*) turn out to be even more distinctly sexual in the case of the classical word *libido*. This noun appears some 25 times in the *Confessions* and nearly always denotes a strong sexual concupiscence or lust.¹⁶ Above I already indicated the evident instances in *Confessions*; here I stress the fact that, according to Augustine, he was for many years a slave of his *libido* (*libidinis seruus*, *conf.* 6,25). He considers how this sinful *libido* (caused by his perverted will) gives rise to a habit (*consuetudo*),¹⁷ and how this habit becomes a necessity (*necessitas*) (*conf.* 8,10: '*Quippe ex uoluntate perversa facta est libido, et dum seruitur libidini, facta est consuetudo, et dum consuetudini non res-*

15 The only exception is in *conf.* 3,7 where Augustine relates his emotion after having read Cicero's *Hortensius*: 'et immortalitatem sapientiae concupiscebam aestu cordis incredibili ...'.

16 Most notable exceptions are 'libido nocendi' (*conf.* 3,15-17) and 'libido uindicandi' (*conf.* 10,58). One is reminded of the well-known concept of *libido dominandi* or 'lust of power' in *ciu.* (e.g. 1, *praef.*; 1,30; 3,14 etc.).

17 Cf. *conf.* 6,22: 'magna autem ex parte atque vehementer *consuetudo satiandae insatiabilis concupiscentiae* me captum excruciat ...'.

- istitur, facta est necessitas*'). He even describes his addiction to sex as a sinful disease (*conf.* 6,25: *morbus animae meae*).¹⁸
- d. Contrary to what might be expected because of modern word usage, the noun *uoluptas* (it occurs over 40 times in the *Confessions*) only seldom denotes sexual concupiscence. The first evident case in point is in *conf.* 4,12, where Augustine speaks of his—also homoerotic?—'*uoluptas cubilis et lecti*: the pleasure(s) of bed and couch'. The second one is in the so-called *uita Alypii* in book 6. Alypius wondered why Augustine 'stuck so fast in the glue of that pleasure (*ita haerere uisco illius uoluptatis*' (*conf.* 6,22)—*uoluptas* here being his morbid inclination to sex. This disease is also meant by '*uictus libidinis talis uoluptatis*: overpowered by the lust of that pleasure' (*ibidem*). Apart from these evident instances, one may wonder whether and to what extent the sinful *uoluptates carnales* (or *uoluptates carnis/corporis*), spoken of on several occasions (*conf.* 4,25; 6,26 [2 ×]; 8,17; 11,4), should be understood in a sexual sense.
- e. Concupiscential sin in the *Confessions* is also indicated by a few other words. *Cupiditas* occurs over 30 times, nearly exclusively in a negative sense, and at least in two cases it has an evidently sexual meaning (*conf.* 2,2: '*per abrupta cupiditatum*: through the abysses of lust'; *conf.* 4,30, referring to the prodigal son of Luke 15: '*ut eam dissiparem in meretrices cupiditates*: to waste it [sc. my strength, *fortitudo*, cf. Ps. 58:10] in the quest for meretricious lusts'). *Fornicatio* is always used in a very negative sense and with an explicitly sexual meaning in *conf.* 2,2 ('*ebulliebam per fornicationes meas*: I boiled up by my fornications') and *conf.* 2,7 ('*ne fornicarer, maximeque ne adulterarem cuiusquam uxorem*: that I should not fall into fornication, and above all that I should not commit adultery with someone else's wife'). In other places (*conf.* 1,21; 2,14; 4,3; 5,22) it is used—as so often in Augustine's œuvre¹⁹—in the biblically inspired sense of 'adultery'. Some other words denoting concupiscential sin include *ignis* (very likely with a sexual meaning in *conf.* 3,2: '*ignis mei*: of my fire', sc. of my passion) and *ardor* (clearly sexual in *conf.* 4,2: '*sed quam* [sc. 'Una'] *indagauerat uagus ardor inops prudentiae*: whom my wandering concupiscence, void of prudence, had tracked down').

Although many modern studies of the multi-layered concept of 'concupiscence' in Augustine's œuvre acknowledge its sexual component,²⁰ a close rea-

18 Cf. *conf.* 6,21: '*et deligatus morbo carnis*'; 8,17: '*a morbo concupiscentiae*'. Cf. also '*omnes languores* [Ps. 102:3] *animae meae*' in the context of *conf.* 10,42.

19 J. van Oort, 'Fornicatio', *AL* 3, Basel: Schwabe 2004–2010, 52–55, esp. 52–53.

20 E.g. G. Bonner, 'Concupiscentia', *AL* 1, Basel-Stuttgart: Schwabe 1986–1994, 1113–1122 (al-

ding of the *Confessions* points to the central place it assumed already in this work. Much in the story of its protagonist concerns sex and sin. This feature urges us to remain fully aware of one of the essential meanings of *confessio* in the title of the work, namely the confession of *sexual* sins. It is from this background that the *cantus firmus* of Augustine's *confessio laudis* is best heard.

though he sees its sexual meaning as specific to Augustine's later anti-Pelagian writings); *idem*, 'Cupiditas', *AL* 2, Basel: Schwabe 1996–2002, 166–172; N. Cipriani, 'Libido', *AL* 3, Basel: Schwabe 2004–2010, 981–985; T. Nisula, *Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence*, Leiden-Boston: Brill 2012.

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This book presents new interpretations of essential and well-known passages from Augustine's *Confessions*. In ten chapters, the Augustinian specialist Johannes van Oort analyzes and explains many essential passages in the work from the background of Augustine's thorough knowledge of Manichaeism. This 'Gnostic' variant of Christianity exerted a great influence on the North African Augustine, as evidenced in his most famous and (arguably) most influential work. In a new light appear such figures as Monnica, Ponticianus, Lady Continence, the rather obscure African bishop who speaks of Augustine as "a son of such tears"; events such as the 'illustrious' pear theft, the coming of "a glorious young man" to dreaming Monnica, Augustine's dramatic conversion; basic features such as his concept of 'God', deep sense of (sexual) sin, highly influential reflections on memory, fundamental view of Christ as God's Right Hand and, perhaps most importantly, his mystical spirituality.

JOHANNES VAN OORT is an extra-ordinary professor of Patristics and Early Christianity at the University of Pretoria. He is an emeritus of Utrecht University and Radboud University Nijmegen. His most recent books include *Mani and Augustine. Collected Essays on Mani, Manichaeism and Augustine* (Brill 2020, reprint 2023) and the edited volume *Manichaeism and Early Christianity. Selected Papers from the 2019 Pretoria Congress and Consultation* (Brill 2021).

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